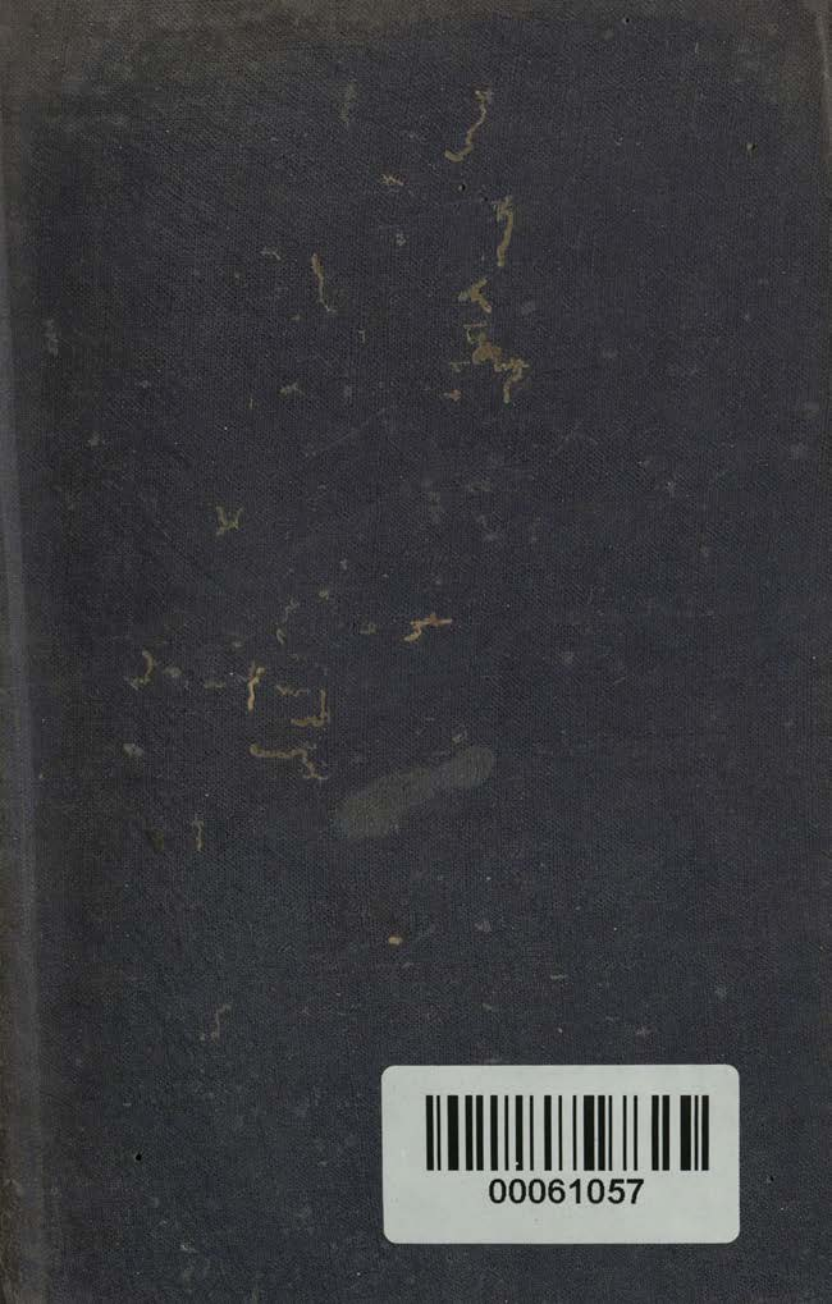
00061057

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

THE TRAGEDIES

OF

ITTORIO ALFIERI:

COMPLETE,

INCLUDING HIS POSTHUMOUS WORKS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

61057

EDITED BY

EDGAR ALFRED BOWRING, C.B.

TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.
1876.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

00061057

V

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	PAGE
XII.—The Conspiracy of the Pazzi	1
XIII.—Don Garcia	57
XIV.—Saul	107
XV.—Agis	165
XVI.—Sophonisba	219
XVII.—The First Brutus	261
XVIII.—Myrrha	311
XIX.—The Second Brutus	365

POSTHUMOUS TRAGEDIES.

XX.—Antony and Cleopatra	419
XXI.—Abel	469
XXII.—Alcestis II.	525

BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

XII.

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE PAZZI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE well-known family of the Medici presided for many years over the destinies of Florence. The famous Lorenzo de' Medici, commonly called The Magnificent, who was born in 1448, succeeded his father Piero in 1469. His brother Julian, who was five years younger than himself, was afterwards associated with him in the government of the Republic, and they were ruling it together at the date of the tragedy (1478) to the satisfaction, as history tells us, of the majority of its inhabitants, but to the ill-concealed dislike of some who feared, justly or otherwise, for the independence of their country. Conspicuous amongst these last was the distinguished family of the Pazzi, one of whom, Raymond, had married Bianca, the sister of Lorenzo and Julian; whilst the head of the family was Raymond's father, Guglielmo. These are the two Pazzi who were concerned in the conspiracy (though the actual conspirators, according to history, were Giacopo, the real head of the family, and his two nephews Francesco and Guglielmo, who—and not Raymond—was Bianca's husband). The remaining personage in the play, besides the members of the two families of Medici and Pazzi, is Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa, who, notwithstanding his holy functions, is shown by the history of the time to have been one of the chief actors in the conspiracy.

The first Act opens with the lamentations addressed by Raymond to his father Guglielmo at the tyranny of the Medici, and his regrets at having allied himself with them

by marriage. His father urges on him prudence a
patience, but implies that he will be ready hereafter,
necessary, to co-operate with him in procuring redr
When Bianca presently sees her husband, she suspe
from his manner that some calamity is impending, a
tries to reconcile him to her brothers, but announces t
in the event of hostility between them she will side w
him rather than with them.

Lorenzo and Julian next confer together. Th
urges the necessity of stern action in order to root
seeds of disaffection. Julian, who is of a gentler natu
is in favor of a milder course. They agree in thinki
that Raymond is their most dangerous enemy. The t
Pazzi then obtain an interview with them. The fatl
begs them not to take the hostile step ascribed to them
deposing Raymond from the post of Gonfaloniere. R
mond however uses haughty language to them, denoun
them as tyrants, and proudly departs. Lorenzo ad
Guglielmo to induce his son to change his course of ac
which can only end in his ruin. Bianca joins her brot
but cannot bring about a reconciliation between them
Raymond.

At the third Act Salviati appears, and informs Rayn
of the approach of the forces sent by King Ferdinand
blessed by Pope Sixtus IV., intended to assist in the o
throw of the Medici. Raymond tells him that he has
yet initiated his aged father in the conspiracy, owing
his vacillating character. Guglielmo enters, and, overco
by the arguments of Salviati and Raymond, at leng
agrees to join the enterprise.

The Medici have now learnt of the arrival of Salvia
Florence, and Julian sends for Guglielmo, hoping to extr
from him information as to what is going on, and in the e
the latter promises to induce his son to go into voluntar
exile. Lorenzo enters, and desires his brother to accompa
him at once against the hostile invaders. Raymond a
Salviati now tell Guglielmo the details of the plot and t
arrangements made for slaying both Lorenzo and Julia
in the church, where they are to go to ask for a blessin
on their arms. Raymond announces his intention
striking the first blow at Julian, whom he expects to fin

ring, from his timid nature, a coat of mail; whilst viati exults in the thought of killing Lorenzo with a ger blessed for the purpose by the Pope.

touching scene takes place at the beginning of Act V. veen Bianca and Raymond. From the disturbed night as passed, she is certain that a catastrophe is at hand. scloses nothing to her, but departs to fulfil his part nspiracy, leaving her with his father, who tells her assing and the danger in which, on the one hand, er husband are placed, and on the other Lorenzo n. Just then the bell tolls, which he knows to e signal for him to join the conspirators. He departs, Raymond enters, dangerously wounded. He tells her he has slain Julian, and in his blind fury inflicted a dful blow on himself also. Lorenzo appears in the scene with his soldiers, and Guglielmo is brought in, ined. Lorenzo announces that Salviati and the other irators have been all killed and the plot defeated, o t Guglielmo is only to live long enough to see the us ous death of his son. Raymond stabs himself with a e er which he had concealed, and throws it to his father, ti n g him to follow his example; but Lorenzo snatches om his hand, and orders him off to ignominious tion. Bianca clings to the neck of her dead husband, gh he has slain her brother, and the curtain falls.

---

he published dedication of this play to Gori Gandellini *post*) differs altogether from its original dedication m during his lifetime. In the latter, the poet states he dedicates to him "this liberty-breathing tragedy" use he is the only one of his contemporaries fitted both ppreciate it and to be one of its personages, and that, e were willing, he would have yielded to him the part Raymond, although he was a Tuscan of the eighteenth tury.

Cesarotti, in a long letter to Alfieri dated Sept. 1785, lls him that, although this play is remarkable for the rce of its characters, and worthy of Tacitus and Machiavelli for its politics, it sins in its subject, and that the

characters of the Pazzi are unduly and unhistoric raised above those of the Medici. Bianca he looks o an unnecessary and therefore cold personage, who prod no influence on the plot of the play.

Alfieri himself, whilst admitting various defects i was proud of it, and says that "on no account in world would he not have written it." He admits th third and fifth Acts are the only indispensable c that the first and second Acts contain nothing talk (*chiacchiera*). He thinks that the character mond and Lorenzo are the best. Sismondi say catastrophe is striking, and praises the character of B Schlegel does not like the play.

DEDICATION

TO THE FRIEND OF MY HEART,

FRANCESCO GORI GANDELLINI,

CITIZEN OF SIENNA, DEAD.

BELOVED and adored shade of the best, of the only true and warm friend that I ever had, or ever shall have; I dedicate to thee this tragedy, far less mine than thine; since it contains nothing but the quintessence (perhaps weakly, but truly expressed) of thy strong and sublime sentiments. Destined to thee while alive, I dared not, notwithstanding, dedicate it to thee, because the receiving it might be imputed to thee as a crime.

To thy happy shade, which, leaving me in tears, smiles at all frivolous worldly animosities, I now then dedicate it securely.

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

PARIS, *December* 20, 1787.

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE PAZZI.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORENZO.	RAYMOND.
JULIAN.	SALVIATI.
BIANCA.	*Soldiers.*
GUGLIELMO.	

SCENE.—*The State Palace in Florence.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

GUGLIELMO, RAYMOND.

Ray. To suffer, always suffer? O my father,
Is this the only counsel thou canst give me?
Art thou become so thoroughly a slave,
That thou no longer feel'st the heavy wrongs,
The insults of the Medici's harsh yoke?

Gu. O son, I feel all keenly; and far more
The common danger than my private wrongs.
But yet, what should I do? To such a pitch
Florence by party-spirit is reduced,
That the most inoffensive word may be
Fatal to us, propitious to our tyrants.
O sickly state! it is too evident,
That thou canst now change only for the worse.

Ray. Ah! tell me, where is now the state? Or how,
If one there be, it can be worse? Can we
Be said to live? Live those, who, full of fear,
And abject, and suspicious, drag along
Their infamous and pining days? To us

What harm can now arise? That in the place
Of shameful, and inefficacious tears,
Blood should perchance be shed? And what? Dost thou
Call shedding blood the greatest injury?
Thou, who, a thousand times, with noble joy,
To me, a child, the ancient times recalledst,
And execratedst these degen'rate days;
Thou now, like ev'ry vulgar citizen,
Submittest to the yoke thy passive neck?

Gu. There was a time, I seek not to deny it,
When, all impatient at our many wrongs,
And full of anger, and elastic spirits,
I would have sacrificed, without a thought,
My wealth, my honors, and my life, to crush
The usurpation of new tyrants, raised
On our misfortunes: to the fire of youth
All things seem easy; so they seem'd to me.
But, finding to my great designs few friends,
And those few friends of wav'ring constancy;
Beholding ev'ry year that tyranny
Its roots struck ever deeper in this soil;
And being, too, a father; all induced me,
To safer, but less elevated schemes,
To turn my thoughts. The tyrants would have found
In me a weak, and ineffectual foe:
Hence sought I their alliance. I bestow'd
On thee their sister's hand. Since we no more
Flourish'd beneath the shade of liberty;
I hence would see thee, and thy future sons,
Placed in the covert of the plumes, at least,
Of tyranny's audacious, spreading wings.

Ray. Protection infamous, and insecure.
Bianca, though the sister of the tyrants,
Is thence not insupportable to me;
Her, and the sons whom she to me has given,
Though nephews of the tyrants, hold I dear.
My blameless wife I blame not for her brothers;
Thyself I blame alone, for having mix'd
Their blood with ours, O father. In this act
I would not thwart thy purpose: but, at last
Thou see'st the fruits of such servility:

By this alliance thou didst hope to reap
Both pow'r and honor; and we thence have reap'd
Contempt, disparagement, and infamy.
The citizens abhor us, and with reason;
We are the tyrants' kinsmen: thence have they
Exchanged their hatred of us for contempt;
And we, who were not citizens, deserve it.
Gu. Thou hadst found me, in other climes, O son,
A spur to deeds illustrious, not a check.
What it has cost my not ignoble heart
To smother indignation, and to feign
An insincere attachment, thou thyself
Canst best conceive. E'en from thy infancy
I have, 'tis true, discover'd in thy heart
The seeds of an impatient liberty:
At times, I must confess, I saw with joy
This bias of thy soul; but far more oft
I inwardly regretted, when in thee
I contemplated afterwards a soul
Too free and lofty. Thence it seem'd to me
That the consummate sweetness of Bianca
Was not ill qualified to mitigate
Thy perilous impetuosity:
At length thou wert a father; and art still so,
As I am to my sorrow . . . Ah! that I
Had never been so! Then at once with her,
And for her, had my country seen me die.
Ray. And yet thou madest me a father, where
To be a father, is to be a slave?
Gu. But then at least our servitude was doubtful . . .
Ray. Our infamy indeed was less confirm'd . . .
Gu. 'Tis true; I hoped, since to our common wrongs
All remedies were fruitless and too late,
That thou might'st pass thy days in quietness,
Blest in a father's and a husband's feelings . . .
Ray. But, e'en though I were sprung from other blood,
Can any man live in security
In such a place, as husband and as father?
I was not, no, assuredly to these
Vain trappings of vain magistracy, born,
Which make him seem the first, who is the last.

For this, perchance, the tyrants have to-day
Assay'd to take them from me: trappings these,
So much the more disgraceful, as they are
The cloak of simulated liberty.
'Twas infamous to clothe me with them; now
'Twill be as infamous to rob me of them:
O cursèd destiny!

Gu. Report of this
Is spread: it even reach'd my ears; but I
Cannot believe it, no . . .

Ray. Why not believe it?
Have not they shown us more offensive insults?
Possessions seized, dost thou no more remember,
And statutes changed, alone to aim at us?
Since we ignobly made ourselves their kinsmen,
We've always been more exquisitely injured.

Gu. Hear me, O son: and to my hoary age,
My long experience, trust. The just disdain,
Which in the deep recesses of my heart
I also cherish, with rash impotence
Exhaust not thou: we yet awhile may bear:
I ne'er can think that they would take from thee
A dignity conferr'd, whate'er it be.—
But yet, should they all bounds of suff'rance pass,
Be silent thou: full oft revengeful words
Defeat revengeful deeds. A lofty vengeance
Is the sure daughter of a lofty silence.
The courteous carriage of the tyrants tow'rds us
Gives thee a lesson in the art of hating.
Meanwhile, O son, I would alone exhort,
And teach thee, to endure . . . Nor afterwards,
Shall I disdain, if one day it be needful,
To learn from thee how to direct the blow.

Scene II.

RAYMOND.

Ray. . . . I dare not trust in him . . . Let Salviati
First to these shores return.—My father now
Discovers nothing of my purposes:
He knows not that to-day it pleases me

More to exasperate than soothe these tyrants.—
Ah father! wouldst thou fain now be to me
A teacher of endurance? Art thou he,
Than whom thy country formerly had not
A more intrepid champion? How propense,
Chilly old-age, art thou to servitude!—
Ah! if nought else by length of years is learn'd,
But how to tremble, to obey, to suffer,
In silence to endure; rather than learn
Such abject arts, I'll choose a bitter death.

SCENE III.

BIANCA, RAYMOND.

Bi. Consort, at last I find thee. Ah, with whom
Wouldst thou fain be, if still from me thou fliest?
Ray. Here, with my father, I at length conversed
A short time since; but I have not thence gain'd
Alleviation to my wrongs.
Bi. He is,
Though good in all things else, the best of fathers:
He fears not for himself; but all his fears
Are for his children roused. The good old man
Smothers, for us, the anger in his breast:
Believe not, no, that valor is exhausted,
Or intrepidity in him subdued:
Ah! suffer then that I repeat it to thee;
He is the best of fathers.
Ray. O! perchance,
Thou wouldst acquaint me that I am not like him?
Thou know'st, if nothing else avail'd, thy prayers
Were ever potent to restrain my wrath;
Thy prayers alone, Bianca, thy chaste love,
And thy maternal tears. I have esteem'd thee
Companion sweet, not sister of my foes...
But, does it seem to thee, to-day, that still
I ought to hold my peace? to-day, decreed
To see the forfeiture without just cause
Of this my rank among the people? when
We're doom'd as fugitives to quit this dwelling,
Asylum sacred once to public freedom?

Bi. Mighty they are; what boots it then with words
To anger those who answer not, but act?
Thy silence, better far than menaces,
Might now appease them.
Ray. And would I appease them?...
—But, to appease them nothing now avails...
Bi. Nothing? Is not my blood the same as theirs?...
Ray. I know it; and I grieve for it; be silent;
Recall it not to mind.
Bi. And what? For this,
Art thou, or hast thou been, less dear to me?
Am not I ready, if to bear their sway
Is irksome to thee, wheresoe'er thou wilt
To follow thee? or, if thy haughty soul
Scorns not to have in me a means of peace,
Am I less ready for thyself to speak,
To weep, to pray, and even, if I ought,
By dint of force to make my brothers yield?
Ray. To pray for me? and whom to pray to? tyrants?—
Canst thou intend it, madam? and canst thou
Expect that I permit it?
Bi. Riches, power,
Arms, partisans, hast thou, whence openly
Thou canst make head against them?...
Ray. In my breast
A hate I cherish, equal to their hate;
Courage superior far.
Bi. Alas! what say'st thou?
Wouldst thou perchance attempt?... Ah! thou mayst lose
Father, and consort, children, honor, life...
And what canst thou acquire? Within thy heart
The flatt'ring expectation cherish not:
No genuine wish in this vile people lives
For pristine perfect liberty: from me
Trust this assertion. Trust to me; I, born,
And in the lap of nascent tyranny
Brought up, all its dependencies well know.
Tools thou wilt find by thousands and by thousands,
In their discourse ferocious, in their deeds
Contemptible, in time of danger nothing;

Or skilful only in betraying thee.
I am not so unnatural and cruel,
As to abhor my brothers; yet far less
Have they been loved by me, since I have seen
Their arrogance tow'rds thee; that arrogance
Galls my afflicted spirit. If I am
Compell'd by thee to make the fatal choice
'Twixt thee and them; by thee I am a mother,
Thy wife am I, thou art oppress'd; I cannot,
Nor ought to hesitate. But thou, awhile,
Do thou resolve on naught: the enterprise
To make thee, if not happy, safe at least,
Leave thou to me; let me at least attempt it.
Or do I not perchance yet fully know
How I, the consort of a citizen,
Ought to address a tyrant? Yet perchance
Do I not know how far I may unite
To not invalid reasons, lofty prayers?
I am a mother, sister, wife; in whom,
If not in me, canst thou confide?
Ray. O Heav'ns!
Madam, thy words afflict me. Peace would I
Also obtain; but, not with infamy.
What to thy brothers couldst thou say for me?
That I deserve not insults? Well they know it;
Hence they insult me: That I brook not wrongs?
Why make that known which only from my lips
They ought to know?
Bi. Ah! ... if to them thou speakest, ...
Alas! ...
Ray. What fear'st thou? True it is, that I
Can never change my soul; but, if I will,
I can be silent. Thou, beloved Bianca,
Thou, and my sons, are always in my thoughts:
Impetuous, intolerant, audacious
If I was born, yet not on this account
Do I let slip a word by accident:
Compose thyself; I also wish for peace.
Bi. Yet from thy countenance do I infer
Thy heart is shaken by a frightful storm ...
In thee I no forerunners see of peace.

Ray. I am not joyful; but in me suspect not
Cruel designs.
Bi. I fear; yet know not why . . .
Ray. Because thou lov'st me.
Bi. Heav'ns! and with what love! . . .
Ah! if the path that leads to genuine glory
Were open'd to thee now! . . . But we are doom'd
To drag out life in a corrupted age:
Submission is our glory; and self-love
Our only virtue. What wouldst thou effect?
One man could not regenerate a people;
And coadjutors here thou wilt not find.
Ray. Hence I pine inwardly, and hence . . . am silent.
Bi. Come then; and let us elsewhere turn our steps:
My brothers sometimes place their judgment-seat
In these apartments . . .
Ray. This is the retreat,
I know, in which to lying praise their ears
They open, and their bosoms close to pity.
Bi. Come then with me; and mingle with the poison
That subtly creeps through ev'ry throbbing vein,
Some soothing balsam. Thou hast not to-day
Embraced our children yet. Ah come, I pray thee:
And with their innocent and silent kisses
Let them, far better than I can with words,
Remind thee that thou art a father still.
Ray. Ah, could I, as to-day I recollect
The name of father, that of man forget!—
But, let us now depart.—Thou shalt have proof
Whether my children are beloved by me.—
Ah, thou know'st not (and mayst thou never know!)
To what extremities his children drive
A real father; how he may be goaded
To their destruction by excessive love.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

JULIAN, LORENZO.

Lo. Brother, what boots it? Thou hast hitherto
Trusted to me: does it now seem to thee
That, by my means, our pow'r has been diminish'd?
Thou talkest of restraining men: are these
Restrain'd? If such had met with tolerance,
Say: had we risen to our present greatness?
Ju. 'Tis true, Lorenzo, a benignant star
Shines on us hitherto. We owe in part
To fortune our advancement; but still more
To our forefathers' lofty counsels owe it.
Cosmo possess'd the state, but he possess'd it
Under the semblance of a private man.
Nor are the fetters yet so firmly fix'd,
That with the outside form of royalty
We may securely grasp them. Let us leave
To fools, who form the multitude, the vain
Appearances of their lost liberty.
In its commencement, arbitrary power,
The less it is display'd, is more confirm'd.
Lo. We, Julian, have not yet the apex reach'd:
It is the time to dare, and not to weigh.
Cosmo already centred in himself
His universal country, and by all,
As with one voice, was welcomed as a father.
Little or nothing to the complex fabric
Our sire, Piero, added: adverse fate
Quickly cut short the few and feeble days
That he survived his sire: he added little;
But meanwhile he to Cosmo next succeeding,
We to Piero, something is obtain'd
In making thus the citizens respect
Hereditary right. Our foes thenceforward
Have been each day dispersed, enfeebled, slain;
Our friends are forced or train'd to yield obedience;
Now, when all things invite us to complete

Cosmo's magnanimous designs, shall we
Be self-defeated by our cowardice?
Ju. Wisely we ought to bring it to an end;
But in a manner mod'rate and humane.
Where gentle measures may effect our ends,
With cautious speed, inflexible, yet mild;
And, when 'tis needful, sparingly severe.
Brother, believe me; to eradicate
Those seeds of liberty, by nature placed
In ev'ry human breast, no little art,
And management, besides a length of time,
Are requisite: these seeds may be suppress'd,
By spilling human blood, but not extinguish'd;
And oftentimes from blood they shoot again
With greater energy . . .
Lo. And do I wish
To shed the blood of these? The axe in Rome
Was Sylla's instrument; but e'en the rod
Is too imposing here: my words alone
Suffice to make them tremble.
Ju. Blind reliance!
Knowest thou not, that none are to be fear'd
Like men enslaved? Sylla dismiss'd his guards,
Yet hence was he not slain; but girt with arms,
With satellites, and mercenary spies,
Nero, Domitian, and Caligula,
And many others that have ruled o'er slaves,
By their own minions butcher'd, fell ignobly.—
Why irritate those who obey already?
Obtain thy end by other means. 'Tis true,
The people here were never wholly free;
But notwithstanding never slaves to one.—
Thou shouldst benumb their minds; and utterly
Enervate their affections; each high thought
Subtly eradicate: abolish virtue,
(If it exists), or turn it to a jest;
Install among thy creatures the most pliant;
Degrade the falsely proud, by giving honors;
Declaim in lofty and imposing tones
Of clemency, of country, glory, laws,
And citizens; and, more than aught besides,

Affect equality with thy inferiors.—
Behold the mighty means, by which in each
Are changed, by little and by little, first
The feelings, then the customs, thence the laws;
Then the deportment of the ruler; last,
That which alone remains to change, his name.
Lo. Our ancestors with happy auspices
Already have adopted all these measures:
The foolish quarrels of the citizens,
If now a link is wanting to the chain,
Should fabricate that link. One, only one,
Openly dares, in short, to brave our power;
And ought he to be fear'd?
Ju. Ferocious son
Of disaffected father, Raymond gives
Just ground for apprehension . . .
Lo. Both should be
(And to this project I address myself)
Blasted by scorn: e'en a revenge like that
Would be indeed delightful . . .
Ju. And not safe.
Lo. Great as the project is, my mind is fix'd.
I from his rank will hurl that haughty youth;
And suffer him to scatter at his will
Seditious words in vain: thus all shall see
How thoroughly I scorn his menaces.
Ju. A foe offended, and not slain? At this,
What bosom, e'en though mail'd with triple steel,
Would tremble not? Shouldst thou make him a foe
Whom thou couldst extirpate? Why give him thus,
Thyself, incautiously, so many pretexts
To agitate the state? Why make him thus
The head, and leader of the malcontents?
And they are num'rous; many, many more
Than thou suspectest. Open force they have not?
I trust that it is so: but who will guard
Our back from treason? Will suspicion, say,
Suffice for this? It may suffice to spoil
Our quiet, not to give security.
Lo. Audacity will be our best defence:
Audacity, which is to daring breasts

At once a sword, and intellect, and shield.
By silence, I'll invite to new offences
The daring youthful rebel. Injured then,
Not slain by those who might have slain him, he
Will be the scorn of those whom now he leads.

Scene II.

LORENZO, JULIAN, GUGLIELMO, RAYMOND.

Gu. Follow me now, O son; and, I beseech thee,
Suffer me here to speak alone.—O ye,
(For yet I know not by what epithet
I should accost you) in a suppliant posture,
Behold me here your once implacable,
And bitter enemy. I know that better,
Better adapted to my age infirm,
Would free expressions be, and freer deeds;
Nor with my nature, though I use them, do
These servile ones accord. But I am not
The only one remaining of my house;
Whence to your fortune, and to tyrannous
And base necessity, I long have yielded
Myself, my life, my substance, and my honor,
My children, all did I confide to you;
Nor was I more reluctant to obey,
Than others were. Thence can I scarce believe
That which is now reported; that ye mean
With wrongs unmerited to injure Raymond,
And me in him. But, if indeed 'tis true,
May I demand of you the cause of this?

Ju. Why from thy son dost thou not first demand
The cause of his deportment, of his language? . . .

Ray. I'll not refuse to give account to him:
Nor can I ever meet with those, to whom
I would more freely, than to you, confess
My purposes . . .

Lo. Thy purposes I know.—
But, I would teach thee, that, if thou wouldst cope
With those in pow'r, there's need of enterprise
Proportion'd to thy envy; and, not less,

Strength to that lofty enterprise proportion'd.
Say: fares it so with thee?
Gu. I hitherto
Am chief of all our race; nor is there one
Who dares to move, if I precede him not.
I speak of deeds. What? do ye in addition
Pretend to sit in judgment on our thoughts?
Are ineffectual words high treason here?
Are we so far advanced?—If rights like these
Are in you, I would ask you: What are ye,
That men may learn more abjectly to fear?
Ray. What are they? Dost thou ask it? Do not they
Tremendously, though tacitly, express it
Upon their cruel and imperious faces?—
Yes, they are all; and nothing we.
Ju. We are
The fearless guardians of the sacred laws;
We are exterminating flames from Heaven
To culprits like thyself; but, to the good,
Heart-cheering benefactors.
Lo. In one word,
Such are we, as to hold thee in contempt.
Our will to thee assign'd the gonfalon;
Another will of ours, more just, recalls it.
With honor undeserved invested by us,
Thou askest by what right we gave it thee?
Ray. Who knows it not? It was your terror gave it;
Your terror takes it from me: to yourselves
Terror is law supreme and deity.
What attribute of kings do ye possess not?
Already ye possess the public hate,
Their cruel artifice, their frantic vices,
Their infamous contrivances. Ye tread
The gen'rous path trod by your ancestors:
Proceed, O valiant ones, with spreading sails,
While prosp'rous gales befriend you. Not wealth only,
But life and honor ye will take away
From those who give you umbrage: the sublime,
And only right to your authority,
From waste of blood arises. Greatly dare:

And try to imitate the many tyrants,
By whom down-trodden Italy is scourged . . .
Gu. My son, thou dost exceed all bounds. 'Tis true,
That it is lawful for each man to speak
His thoughts, while these have not thrown off the name
Of citizens; but we . . .
Lo. Too late thou'rt cautious:
Thy time hast thou ill chosen to restrain him.
Fret not thyself; his words are thy begetting.
Leave him to speak: on us depends to hear him.
Ju. Audacious youth, minds ill-disposed already,
What boots it to exasperate? 'Twould be
The best for thee spontaneously to quit
The gonfalon, which in contempt of us
Thou wouldest keep in vain; thou seeest well . . .
Ray. Am I so vile, as to deserve these insults?
Hear me: these arts successfully perchance
May be adopted to ensure command,
But cannot gain obedience. If I yield,
I yield alone to force. Honor sometimes
Is by submission gain'd, if we indeed
Submit to nothing but to absolute,
And dire necessity.—It pleases me,
As I have told you mine, to hear your thoughts.
Now, new means to new violence I wait
To see, and be it what it may, I swear
That I will be of rising tyranny
The victim, yes, but not the instrument.

Scene III.

LORENZO, JULIAN, GUGLIELMO.

Lo. Go; if thou carest for thy son, pursue him:
To fit his conduct better to the times,
Instruct him; and to this do thou thyself,
By thy example, aid him. Equally
With him indeed thou hatest us, yet thou
Hast yielded to us, and dost yield: engraft
Thy own discretion on his headstrong will.
I do not e'en pretend regard for you;
Ill have ye feign'd; and nothing it annoys me:

Hate, but obey; and in obeying, tremble.
Go thou, and tell to this thy make-believe
And pigmy Brutus, that his prototype,
The genuine Brutus, fell in vain with Rome.
Gu. I see my son wants caution. Yet I always
Applied to him a father's wise reproofs;
I preach endurance; but he learns it not.
This is an art to which we've not been used:
Failings of youth are worthy of excuse;
He will amend.—But thou, O Julian, thou
Who art with honors and prosperity
Intoxicated less, thy brother soften;
And make him recollect, that if a Brutus
Fail'd to regen'rate Rome, yet many others
Were sacrificed, ere Rome and Brutus fell.

Scene IV.

LORENZO, JULIAN.

Ju. Heard'st thou how these address us? . . .
Lo. Yes, I hear.
They're garrulous, and thence I fear them less.
Ju. One may hatch plots . . .
Lo. But few will follow him . . .
Ju. Raymond may be that one.
Lo. That he may be
That one, is what I hope. I fully know
His courage, his resources, and his force:
He may attempt, but he will ne'er succeed:
What can I wish for more? I look to him,
Hoping that he our mandate may transgress.
Let him attempt it; we at once will thwart him.
Each hostile enterprise confirms our power,
And to our just revenge at once prepares
An ample field for action. In calm seas
Progress is difficult; the earliest storm
Will drive our vessel to the wish'd-for port.
Ju. To wish for all at once, often at once
Causes the loss of all. All danger's doubtful;
Nor he who fills the throne should e'er permit
Even the thought to cross his subjects' minds,

That he's assailable by other men.
The multitude's opinion, which esteems
Our breasts invulnerable, is itself
The very panoply that makes them so.
Woe, if we leave the passage to our hearts
Once obvious to the point of rebels' swords!
A day will come when it will penetrate,
And find a passage to the very hilt.
To-day, O brother, credence give to me;
No, our authority put not to proof,
Nor their revenge. Ah, yield thyself to me.

Lo. To reason I am always wont to yield;
And this I hope to prove to thee.—But see,
Bianca comes to us in tears: how painful
'Tis, her laments to hear!... yet we must hear them.

Scene V.

BIANCA, LORENZO, JULIAN.

Bi. And is it true, O brothers? Is't your will
To show yourselves to me oppressive lords,
Rather than brothers? Yet, if I to you
Was ever dear, I am your sister still;
And ye to Raymond gave me: is it ye
Who thus are first to wound him?

Lo. Hast thou now
Become, Bianca, to thy blood so hostile,
That thou no more discernest equity?
Hast thou with Raymond learn'd so much to hate us,
That now our hearts are known to thee no longer?
All that we wish to do is to defeat
His malice by our measures. Gentle means,
Far gentler than he merits, we adopt,
To obviate further mischief; this believe.

Bi. Dear are ye to me, brothers; he to me
Is also dear: I would do all for peace.
If he already was your foe, why did ye
Give me to him in marriage? If ye gave me
To him, why then insult him afterwards?

Ju. We hoped that thou at least wouldst be a check
To his temerity...

Lo. But hoped in vain:
For such is Raymond, that 'twere easier far
To kill him than to change him.
Bi. But have ye
Ever tow'rds him the manners used, that change
A free, unconquer'd heart? If you it grieves
Not to be loved by him, who, save yourselves,
Prohibits his affection?
Lo. O my sister,
How has the traitor utterly transfused
His poison in thy heart! He hath estranged
Thee, our own sister, from all duteous thoughts;
Guess, then, how banefully his hostile words
Will operate elsewhere.
Bi. I might behold
With some complacency your sov'reign power,
If one man I beheld, one, only one,
From your ferocious tyranny exempt;
And if that one were Raymond: he, to whom,
By an indissoluble sacred tie,
Ye have united me; with whom I've lived
Inseparably join'd for many years,
With whom I suffer, and with whom endure
A thousand injuries; to whom, moreover,
Pledges of love and of eternal faith,
(Unhappy mother!) I have giv'n already
Too numerous and dear a progeny:—
Raymond, to whom I'm ready to yield all.
Ju. To take from him his office, is to wrest
The pow'r of self-destruction from his hands,
Rather than that of injuring ourselves.
It would become thee well to be the first
To lead him to renounce it . . .
Bi. Ah! I see,
I manifestly see, by diff'rent means,
How to one end ye hasten. Of your views
I was the earliest victim; I was not
To real peace, but to delay'd revenge,
A sacrifice. O, well ye understood
To ape at once the hearts and pow'r of kings.
With those resembling you, all ties of blood

Are treated with derision . . . Hapless I!
Why had I not discover'd this before!
Why knew it not before I was a mother? . . .
But such I am; a lover, and a wife . . .
Lo. I cannot blame thy grief; . . . but longer now
We cannot hear it.—Brother, let us go
Whither our duty summons us.—And thou,
Who deem'st us tyrants in thy heart, think not
Of that which he has lost, but rather think
Of that which, nothing meriting, he keeps.

Scene VI.

BIANCA.

Bi. . . . Not to deprive; behold the gift of kings!—
With them my tears are vain: their hearts are mail'd
In adamant. Let me return once more
To hapless Raymond: he at least beholds
My tears without contempt. Who knows? Perchance
My griefs may thus be lighten'd . . . Why perchance?
Can there be doubt of this? We should behold
Each father promptly for his children's sake
Resign his life, before a single prince
Would to the tears of all, much less a sister's,
Sacrifice e'en one miserable whim.

ACT III.

Scene I.

RAYMOND, SALVIATI.

Sal. Behold me here: this is the day appointed:
I come; and bring with me whate'er I promised.
Already to the borders of Etruria
Warriors advance in arms; King Ferdinand
Pays them, the Roman Sixtus blesses them;
Ere they proceed, they wait to hear from us
The signal of attack. Now say, hast thou
All the assistance promised in these walls?
Ray. My arm has long been ready for the blow:

And I have store of others also ready:
But, whom to strike, or where, or how, or when,
They know not; nor befits it that they know.
To the great undertaking yet is wanting
Its chief: my agèd father, Guglielmo,
He who alone could the attempt inspirit,
Knows nothing of it: to revengeful words
His ears are closed; and thou wilt hear him speak
Of suff'rance yet. My thoughts are known to him;
For ill I hide them; further knows he nothing:
I deem'd it wisest to conceal from him
This our conspiracy till thou cam'st hither.

Sal. What say'st thou? Nothing Guglielmo knows?
And thinkest thou that, at the close of day,
He should be ignorant of what he's destined
To-morrow to accomplish?

Ray. Thinkest thou
That it were wise to risk so great a secret?
That to a man, (though enterprising once,)
Infirm from years, 'twere wise to grant one night
To after-thoughts? Beyond a few brief hours
Audacity dwells not in empty veins;
Prudence comes soon; irresolution thence,
Procrastination and inconstancy,
And the infecting others with alarm;
And, 'midst these doubts and fears, the enterprise,
The time for its completion, and the wrath
Ensuring its success, dissolve away,
And guilty shame at last o'erwhelms the whole.

Sal. But how? detests he not the dreadful yoke?
And shares he not the gen'ral indignation? . . .

Ray. He hates it, but he fears more than he hates;
And thence he vacillates eternally
'Twixt anger and dismay. Now he controls
His wholesome indignation, and he prays,
And waits for, and half hopes for, better times;
And now, as by a fatal flash reveal'd,
The truth at once on his bewilder'd mind
Bursts forth, and all the heaviness he feels
Of his unworthy chains; yet dares not burst them.
He was indeed incensed beyond all bounds

At the last outrage, which I would incur
At all events. The useless gonfalon
Which I have lost to-day, let others gain.
I have, with many and repeated insults,
Myself compell'd the tyrants to resume
The honor they bestow'd. Yet not the less
For this have I indulged in loud complaints;
Affecting an immeasurable grief
For the invited injury.—O see
What times and place we live in, where deceit
With virtue must be mix'd!—By arts like these
I have, at least in part, to my designs
Silently bent my father's heart already.
At length thou comest: thou shalt now divulge
The king's assistance, and the papal wrath,
And means concerted. Let us wait him here;
For here we are accustom'd to confer.

Sal. Do not the tyrants oftentimes repair
To these apartments?

Ray. We are now secure
From their approach: before the stroke of three,
They finish'd here (and ill) their public labors.
The remnant of the day, which we consume,
We, the scorn'd multitude, in useless tears,
They spend in revels and in sensual joys.
Hence I invited thee to meet me here;
My father I have also summon'd. He,
At first, will be amazed at seeing thee:
In a short time I will reveal to him
The indignation and the hardihood,
And the immutable and stern resolve
Of giving death, or dying, which we feel:
Mine be it to inflame him. But, meanwhile,
Learn he at once that this conspiracy
Both can be form'd, and is already form'd.

Sal. Thou dost admonish wisely: more and more
I deem thee, as I listen to thy words,
A worthy instrument of liberty.
As these are born oppressors, so art thou
Defender of thy country. To induce
Thy father to concur in our designs,

The sacred will of Rome will much avail?
Those early principles with aged hearts
Have mighty weight, which even with their milk
They once imbibed. Rome, evermore believed
Implicitly by our forefathers, named
Each enterprise that she deem'd hurtful to her,
Impious; and those, whatever they might be,
Holy, that aided her ambitious views.
If we are wise, this ancient prejudice
May now avail us much: since, at this time,
Not as he's wont to be, the last successor
Of Peter is the enemy of tyrants,
At this time, more than all allies beside,
Peter's successor may our best friend be.

Ray. It grieves me, I to thee alone confess it;
It grieves me not a little, thus to make
Vile means subservient to a gen'rous end:
To raise, as watchword in the cause of freedom,
The name of Rome, the home of guilty slaves:
Here are the times, and not myself, in fault!
And further am I grieved, that I'm constrain'd
To make pretext of individual wrongs
In this most righteous cause. The multitude
Will think that I'm inflamed by low revenge;
And even envious of the tyrants' power.—
O Heav'n, thou knowest . . .

Sal. Let not thoughts like these
Divert thee from thy purpose; speedily
The foolish vulgar will be undeceived
By our performances.

Ray. The time to come
Fills me with mournful and foreboding thoughts.
Their necks they have accustom'd to the yoke:
Their natural rights forgetting, they know not
That they're in chains; much less desire to burst them.
Slav'ry to slaves seems nature's law; more force
Is needed to unloose them, than to bind them.

Sal. Hence will the enterprise be more exalted,
And worthier of thyself. In Greece or Rome
'Twas meritorious, and not difficult,
To turn free souls to freedom: but to rouse

Dead and degraded slaves at once to life
And liberty, ah, this indeed requires
Sterner devotion.
Ray. It is true: yet fame
Awaits the mere attempt. Ah, were I sure,
As of my own right arm and heart I am,
Of those of my compatriots! But by slaves
The tyrant, not the tyranny, is hated.

Scene II.

GUGLIELMO, SALVIATI, RAYMOND.

Gu. Thou, Salviati, here? I thought thou wert
Pursuing honors on the Tiber's banks.
Sal. A mightier object to my native soil
Restores me.
Gu. Lucklessly dost thou revisit
A soil which it were better to forget.
What foolish purpose guides thee back to us?
Far from the tyrants thou didst dwell, and thou
Returnest to thy prison? To the man
Doom'd to behold his native land enslaved
By cruel and by arbitrary power,
What unfrequented and what distant spot
(However savage and inhospitable,)
Can be unwelcome? Let my son to thee
Be an example, if we ought to look
From these our Medicæan lords for aught,
But outrages and scorn. In vain, in vain
Rome with the sacred ministry invests thee:
Their will supreme alone is here held sacred.
Ray. Father, and know'st thou whether he comes here
Arm'd with endurance, or a shield less vile?
Sal. Of bitter and retributory wrath
I come the minister austere: I come
Of plenary, inflexible revenge,
Though late, the certain messenger. I hope
To wake you all from the vile lethargy
In which ye all lie buried, abject slaves,
Now that with me and with my wrath I bring
The holy wrath of Sixtus, sov'reign pontiff.

Gu. Arms wholly useless: wrath we do not want;
We want support; endurance or support
We stand in need of now.
Sal. Support we bring,
And more effectual than was ever proffer'd.
I bring not words alone.—Hear; for to me,
In brief yet pow'rful language, it belongs
The matter to divulge. There are, by whom
I am commission'd to recall to thee,
Provided thou canst yet remember them,
Thy former boldness, and the ancient times:
If not; the painful duty then is mine
The degradation of thyself and others
To bring before thine eyes. If in thy veins
There yet is blood left to revolt at this,
Assistance is not far from us: already
The Roman banners in Etruria's ports
Wave to the wind; and far more firm support
The standard of King Ferdinand affords,
Follow'd by thousand swords in firm array,
Impatient for the fight, at one slight nod
Of thine for any enterprise prepared.
In thy arbitrament is placed the life
Of the oppressors, thine and thy son's honor,
The freedom of us all. That which thy sword
May yet obtain, that which thou yet mayst lose
From cowardice; thy doubts, thy hopes, thy fears,
Our loss and our disgrace, maturely weigh;
And finally resolve.
Gu. What do I hear?
To thee can I yield credence? Who obtain'd
So much for our advantage? Hitherto
Profuse alone in empty promises,
Sixtus and Ferdinand were tardy friends:
Who now impels them, who? . . .
Ray. Dost thou ask that?
Hast thou so soon forgotten, then, that I
Went to the Tiber and the shores of Naples?
That fourteen months I stay'd there? To what clime
Can I transport myself, and not inspire,
Where'er I go, resentment and abhorrence?

Among what people can I drag my days,
Into whose bosoms I shall not transfuse
All of my indignation; and at once
Excite in them compassion for myself,
And for my friends? And now, who still remains
Deaf to my lamentations?—For our shame,
Thou art alone so, father; where thou oughtest,
More than all others, to abhor the yoke,
And feel its weight: thou, whom I call my father,
Art equally with me the tyrants' foe;
And art by them, e'en more than I am, scorn'd:
Thou, once the best among good citizens,
For thy too easy criminal endurance
Art now among the guilty ones the worst.
Ah, make, with thy infirm refusal, make
Our fetters and thy infamy eternal!
Let all perceive that we are fit to serve,
But not to live: yes, wait, wait on for time,
Till time is ours no more: those hoary locks
For fresh disgraces keep; and cover over,
With pity false for me, which I abhor,
Thy ignominious cowardice.

Gu. . . . My son;
For such indeed thou art; no less than thou,
Fervid with youth and gen'rous vehemence,
I once thus thunder'd; but that time is past;
E'en now I am not vile, nor deem'st thou so,
Who thus aspersest me; but, I have ceased
To act by chance.

Ray. Thou art resign'd to live
Each day by chance; and wilt not act by chance?
What art thou? What are we? Would not the hope,
The most precarious, of revenge, now be
A state more certain than the doubtful one,
The apprehensive one, in which we're doom'd,
Trembling, to live?

Gu. Thou know'st that for myself
I tremble not . . .

Ray. For me, then, wouldst thou say?
Thee I absolve from all paternal care
On my account. We both are citizens,

And nothing else to-day: and there remains
Far more for me than for thyself to lose.
To the meridian of my days have I
Scarcely attain'd, and thou tow'rds night declinest:
Children thou hast, and I'm a father too;
I have an offspring but too numerous,
And of that helpless age that they are fit
Only to wake compassion in the heart.
Diff'rent, far diff'rent, are my ties from thine.
I see a lovely consort, of myself
The better part, eternally in tears
Beside me pining: when they see her weep,
My children, weeping also, flock around me,
Ignorant of their fate. Their sorrows rend
My heart; and I'm constrain'd to weep by stealth..
But, soon the sad remembrance disenchants
Each soft affection of my wither'd heart,
That 'tis not fitting for a slave to love
Objects not his. My consort is not mine,
My children are not mine, while I permit
Him, whosoe'er he be, that is a tyrant,
In this place to inhale the vital air.
I have no tie now left in all the world,
Except the stern inexorable oath,
Tyrants and tyranny to extirpate.

Gu. Thou must get rid of two: to willing slaves
Will tyrants e'er be wanting?

Ray. To the free
Will swords be wanting? Let them rise by thousands,
By thousands they shall fall; or I will fall.

Gu. I am subdued by thy decisive will.
I, not unworthy of a son like thee,
Would to thy noble rage commit myself,
If of our arms, and not of foreign powers,
Thou wouldst avail thyself. I see not, no,
For our sakes, Rome and Ferdinand in arms;
But only that the Medici may suffer.
We place them in these walls ourselves; but who
At will can chase them afterwards from thence?
The mercenary soldiers of a king
Seem not to me the harbingers of freedom.

Sal. I thus reply to thee. The faith of Rome,

The faith of Ferdinand I warrant not:
It is the wonted plan of those who reign
Alternately to give it or resume it.
In the suspicion common to them both,
Their mutual envy, and in what is call'd
State policy, do thou to-day confide.
Both fain would o'er us domineer; but one
Prevents the other. Pity for our state
Their heart conceives not; nor have I alleged it:
But long experience, to our shame, persuades them
That popular and fluctuating rule,
The turbulence of faction, render us
Slow to resolve, irresolute in act.
Each of them fears that, on the Tuscan ruins,
A single Tuscan chieftain should arise,
Who may be able to resist the one,
If with the other leagued. Behold at once
The royal knot untwisted: private ends
Prompt both alliances. If otherwise,
Think'st thou that I should ever dare to urge
Reliance on the friendship of a king?

Ray. And were it otherwise, dost thou believe
That I would inconsid'rately relax
The reins that I so many years have held
Over the fury in my breast? I breathed not
By accident inflammatory words
To thee; by accident thou didst not hear me
Exasperate with pungent virulence
The tyrants' wrath against me. Long I spake not,
While silence might assist me; but the proud,
Imprudent tauntings that have madden'd them
To injure me, by prudence were inspired.
To my vile fellow-slaves I had in vain
Our common wrongs adduced; for private ones
Alone establish in corrupted minds
Right to retaliation. I could find
Abettors of my vengeance, if alone
I of myself discoursed; but not one such
Could I e'er find, when speaking of my country:
And hence (alas, opprobrious cruel silence,
But indispensable!) I never dared
To name my country, never. But, to thee,

Who art not of the common herd of men,
Can I refrain from naming her? Ah, no!—
One half the work we have to do consists
In slaying the two tyrants; but uncertain,
And greater is the other,—that of making
Our prostrate city once more powerful,
And free, and sound, and capable of virtue.
Now, say'st thou not that we're confederate
To a most holy purpose? I alone
Am leader of this lofty brotherhood;
He is but one, as thou mayst also be,
Of its component parts. We have, thou seeest,
Great instruments; and courage greater still:
Sublime the end, and worthy of ourselves.
Thou, father, from a project great as this,
Wilt thou shrink back dishearten'd? Thy consent
Grant me, O grant me; nothing else is wanting.
The swords unscabbarded are raised already:
Give, give the signal only; and thou'lt see them
In their devoted bosoms plunged at once,
And make an ample space for liberty.

Gu. . . . Thou hast a hero's mind.—A noble shame,
Astonishment, resentment, hope, and rage,
All hast thou raised in me. The sense of age,
The force of manhood, and the fire of youth,
What hast thou not? My guide and my commander,
My deity art thou.—It shall be thine
Alone, the honor of this enterprise;
With thee its dangers only will I share.
Thou say'st, that nought is wanting but my name
To perfect it? Henceforward to thy will
That name, and all its influence, I yield:
Dispose, elect, and whomsoe'er thou wilt,
Rescind from our confederates. Keep only
A weapon for thy father: thou shalt teach me
What post I should fill up, what blow inflict;
All shalt thou teach me, when the whole is ready.
In thee and thy judicious rage I trust.

Ray. But, . . . more than thou dost think, . . . that time draws near.
Thou wilt not be inconstant?

Gu. I'm thy father:
Dost thou expect to change?
Ray. Then whet thy blade,
For at the dawn of day . . . But who approaches?
Bianca! . . . O my friend, let us avoid her.
The last directions to this mighty work
Haste we to give. To thee I shall return,
Father, ere long, and then thou shalt know all.

Scene III.

GUGLIELMO, BIANCA.

Bi. I seek for Raymond; and he flies from me?
O father, tell me why? with whom he flies?—
What do I see? Thou art bereft of reason?
What troublous thoughts estrange thee from thyself?
Ah, speak: does any danger threaten us? . . .
O'er whom does it impend? . . .
Gu. If agony
Heavily sits upon my pallid face,
Why shouldst thou be surprised at this? I fear,
And cannot hide my fears: and who fears not?
If thou look round, a pallidness like mine
On ev'ry face is painted.
Bi. But, for fear
What fresh occasion? . . .
Gu. 'Tis not fresh, O daughter.
Bi. But I have always seen thee hitherto
Immovable: thou fearest now? and say'st it? . . .
And Raymond, who like an impetuous storm
Of violent discordant impulses
Seem'd hitherto to me, do I behold
Assume the semblance of a tranquil man?
Not long ago, words breathing nought but peace
He spake to me: and he, of all suspense
The' instinctive enemy, professes now
To hope alleviation from delay:
He with a stranger flies from me? and thou
Stay'st agitated here? . . . Ah, yes; there is
Too certainly a secret: . . . and thou hidest,

From me thou hidest it? My sire, my spouse,
Vie in deluding me? May Heav'n permit . . .
Gu. Check these suspicions, check these tears: in vain
Should I, alarm'd, exhort thee not to fear.
Fear thou, but not for us.—Well said my son,
That time alone can bring us consolation.
Go to thy children: thou canst not perform
A task more grateful to us than to guard them,
And love them well, and nourish them to virtue.—
Useful advice, if thou from me regard it,
'Twill be to thee, that thou shouldst persevere,
Where words avail not, in profoundest silence . . .
Thus, O Bianca, thou wilt surely win
All our affections: and at once escape
The persecution of thy cruel brothers.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

JULIAN, *and an armed Follower.*

Ju. Ho! instantly bring Guglielmo hither.—

SCENE II.

JULIAN.

Ju. Does Salviati then return to Florence?
Why should he stir from Rome? How dares he plant
His footsteps on these thresholds? Does he thus
Despise our hatred, and our pow'r, and us?—
But yet, if he returns, his hardihood
Springs certainly from force; . . . from borrow'd force.—
Yes, now 'tis indispensable to use
All arts to frustrate that which it were vain
Later to hope to mend. Be Guglielmo
First summon'd to our presence; haply he,
Exhausted by the weaknesses of age,
May by the bait of flatt'ry be surprised
To indiscreet confession. To these traitors

Since Salviati now has join'd himself,
The messenger of papal subtlety,
Great vigilance is needful; we must give
Large promises, and gain both means and time.

Scene III.

GUGLIELMO, JULIAN.

Ju. O Guglielmo, thou who dost possess,
More than all other men, experience, years,
And sense; who all the past and present rights
Of this our country dost discern, and know,
And understand; ah! listen to my words.—
Already, by the pow'r which now is mine,
I am not blinded, nor have I consign'd
To an unjust forgetfulness the name
Of citizen; I know full well how brief,
And how unstable are the gifts of fortune:
I know . . .

Gu. What thou mayst be, who knows? 'Tis true,
Thou dost appear more lenient than thy brother;
But so corrupted is the vulgar mind,
That though it fears thee less, it does not thence
Detest thee less than him. Perchance a tyrant,
Who forces to obey a race enslaved,
Is more acceptable than one who stoops
To dupe them to obedience.

Ju. Yes, Lorenzo
Is not as cautious as I fain would see him;
Nor is thy Raymond so invincible
As he believes himself: let us confer,
Soften'd by more conciliatory thoughts.—
Thou knowest that the citizens, inform'd
And apprehensive of the ancient license,
Committed to our trust the overplus
Of liberty; from whence the nobler parts
Have since remain'd eternally untouch'd . . .

Gu. Why dost thou thus confuse a simple matter,
With subtle phrases destitute of sense?
There is a proper name for servitude.
Call those who yield to despots, slaves at once.

Ju. And to thy freedom give the name of license:
I came not for these flimsy arguments . . .
Gu. 'Tis true, that only folly fights in words.
Ju. Then listen to me, ere I illustrate
This truth with deeds. A fervid virulence
Consumes thy Raymond's heart: with youth and power
Lorenzo also feels life's pulse beat high:
To thee, thy son, and to thy race entire,
May ruin thence result: but also thence
Our ruin may result by treach'rous means.
I speak not of Lorenzo as a brother;
Nor speak thou, as a father, of thy son.
We're citizens, and thou the best. Now say;
Should we not strenuously exert ourselves
To hinder tumults, bloodshed, and disgrace?
And thou the more so now, as thou art placed
In most alarming danger?—Thou, who dar'st
Call servitude, the keeping of the laws,
Perceivest, that amid new broils, to you
The load will rather be increased than lessen'd.
Be thou at once a citizen and father:
Make thy son somewhat yield; if he will only
Confess that he is less than we, with this
Lorenzo will be pacified. It is
To thee allotted with one word of thine
To frustrate each pernicious consequence.
Gu. Who could make Raymond yield? And should I do it,
E'en if I could?
Ju. At once confess to me:
If thou wert sov'reign here, and thou didst see
Thy pow'r contemn'd by us, as ours is now
By him despised; what wouldst thou do with us?
Gu. I should esteem that I, by ruling here,
So much more grievously insulted others,
That of each insult offer'd to myself
I should take no account. Of liberty,
What less part can be left to those who lose it,
Than to lament its loss? Each man should speak,
Were I in your place, as his judgment bids him;
But act conformably alone to mine.

It is the silent man who should be fear'd:
And scatter'd poison injures not its object.—
Frankly I speak to thee: I do not deem
My son for lofty enterprises fit:
Ah, were he so! Thou wouldst not hear me thus
Address thee abjectly; nor hadst thou seen
Me tremble, and obey.—'Gainst foes like us,
Contempt, when managed with dexterity,
('Tis but too true) is adequate defence.—
Behold, it seems to me, that, though no tyrant,
I can prescribe to thee, with decent skill,
The laws of tyranny, the stratagems,
The conduct, and the principles sublime.

Ju. What wouldst thou say to me? And know I not,
As well as thou dost know, this son of thine?

Gu. And dost thou fear him?

Ju. Fear'd, I fear again.—
To simulate, or to dissimulate,
Were idle now. Let us no longer utter
Any fallacious and high-sounding words;
Not from our country, not from laws, or freedom,
But from self-love, and self-utility,
And apprehension of contingent loss,
Let us all take a truer rule of conduct.
Lorenzo all the qualities possesses,
By which a new state is increased and sway'd,
Except forbearance and timidity:
Nature hath form'd me in another mould;
And that which is deficient in himself,
In me is p'rhaps excessive: but confess,
Art thou not e'en more timorous than I?
Do not I see the spirit of mistrust
And fear engraved in e'en thy smallest actions?
No rock is firmer in the waves, well know I,
Than Raymond and Lorenzo stand unmoved
In their resolves: in nature they are equal;
Yet not in pow'r: but equal is our fear.
As with my brother I exert myself,
Do thou exert thyself with this thy son:
P'rhaps we may yet see other times. Few years
Hast thou of life; yet these thou wouldst desire,

Though burdensome and comfortless, to live;
Thou hast supported such . . . Wouldst thou preserve them?

Gu. The terror of a father, and a tyrant,
No one would place in counteracting scales,
Save he who is a tyrant and a father.
I feel my own alarm; thine, thou alone
Canst feel and estimate.—Paternal fear,
Which is the most excusable, to-day
Surmounts the other. Far as I avail,
I will exert myself, that Raymond choose
Spontaneous exile; and 'twere best he did so;
For not for vengeance, but for fresh injustice,
In these abhorrèd walls would he remain.

Scene IV.

LORENZO, JULIAN, GUGLIELMO.

Lo. Julian, what dost thou? Dost thou spend in words
The time that others spend in deeds? . . .

Ju. At last
This old man yields to my persuasive speech:
Dost spurn at peace, before I've made it sure?

Lo. Who talks of peace now? Salviati comes,
The source of all disturbance, the contriver
Of every guilty, circumventive plot . . .

Ju. I know it; but meanwhile . . .

Lo. And dost thou know,
That from the south he brings arm'd warriors here?
In truth, no martial race; to whom we ought
To show ourselves, and only show ourselves.
At the first glitt'ring of our shields, at once
Their marshy mist will be dispersed. Indeed,
What courage, founded not on others' fears,
Was e'er display'd by Rome?

Gu. And what, my lord?
Can one defenceless citizen's return
From Tiber's banks excite suspicion in thee?
And to your detriment would Rome now arm,
Who so infrequently and clumsily
Combats, and only in her own defence?

Lo. More than one hero hath been made to tremble
Before the faithless race of Roman pastors.
'Mid roses, and 'mid lilies, they conceal
Daggers and poison. It is true, their arms
Would, if foreseen, be always impotent.—
Ye satellites of Rome, I leave you here:
Plot ye, till I return. My brother, come,
Let us depart: and we will afterwards
With these resume our conference: but first
Let those pale timid banners that display
The lying keys, be taken or dispersed,
Or burn'd, or trampled in the mire beneath
Our conqu'ring hands. We first should somewhat shake
The putrid agèd trunk on which fraud leans;
Since it belongs to ages more remote
Wholly to root it up.—Now let us go.—
With joy my heart leaps up in thrusting thee
Against an open enemy, O sword!
And only I regret, if thou disdain
To smite the back of hostile fugitives,
That thou must here return, not fed with blood.

Scene V.

GUGLIELMO.

Gu. He has a lofty soul; a soul too great
For tyranny. He doubtless here will reign,
Unless he fall a victim to our swords.—
But reign, reign at thy pleasure; thou wilt be
Quickly resembling thy perfidious brother:
Crafty, flagitious, apprehensive, cruel:
In short, what he who reigns, both is and should be.—
Now, night draws near already; and my son
Comes not to me; nor Salviati comes.—
But, of the Roman troops not yet in march
How could Lorenzo hear? This enterprise
Which we project is hard to execute;
'Tis doubtful too: but yet, the rage and hatred,
Mingled with judgment, of my son, once more
Assure me. Let me seek him . . . Here he is.

Scene VI.

RAYMOND, SALVIATI, GUGLIELMO.

Gu. O! tell me how our undertaking stands?
Ray. Almost completed.
Sal. Heav'n now smiles upon us:
My hopes are more than realized.
Gu. Far more
Than I was heretofore, ye find me ready,
And for an ample vengeance. Insolence!
Here Julian took upon himself erewhile
To covenant with me for our disgrace;
And afterwards Lorenzo join'd his brother,
Threat'ning and arrogant. I spake to him
Now doubtful words, indignant now, now feign'd;
And most of them in servile tones disguised,
To tyrants so acceptable: they deem
No crime so dire as that of fearlessness.
I would not rouse suspicion in their souls;
They think me full of fear.—But, tell me how
The secret of the foreign armament
Hath thus in part transpired? Lorenzo seems,
'Tis true, to view it with consummate scorn,
And to account it as the feeble fruit
Of the intrigues which we have been preparing.
Such confidence assists us; and though Julian
Hath intimated that he apprehends
Domestic discontents, he fancies not
The vengeance so inevitably near,
Or so alarming, as it is. Ah say,
Is our success then certain? What assailant,
What arms, what means, where, when? . . .
Ray. Hear thou the whole.
Meanwhile with wonder be not stupefied
At what Lorenzo knows. We artfully,
Their forces to divert, at first proclaim'd
The foe's approach. But in the vulgar ear
The arms of Rome exclusively resound:
"The holy Sixtus sends a little aid
"To rescue from their novel servitude
"The Tuscan people."—This is the report,

By means of which I trusted that the tyrants,
A scanty, but an open force expecting,
Would turn tow'rds this alone their ev'ry thought;
And rightly I conjectured. To the camp,
At dawn of day, Lorenzo hastes to go;
But too inevitably will arise
That dawn for him, his last upon the earth.
Both shall be slain to-morrow. I have chosen
A few, but stubborn both in hand and heart,
For the great enterprise. Anselmo, Albert,
Napoleon, and Bandini, and thy son.
Rinato vile, dishonoring our race,
Refused to be one of the noble band.

Gu. Coward! and should he now betray us?

Ray. O,
That he could never do! but, free from vice,
He has no virtue: speak of him no more.—
Ready for ev'ry sign, Anselmo keeps
His armèd men; but wherefore, this they know not:
We shall commence the' attack at the same time
That he will occupy the greater forum,
The palace, and the many avenues
Thitherward tending; thence the populace
Invite to freedom: we meanwhile shall join them . . .

Gu. But, in one place to put them both to death
Do ye expect? Woe, if an interval,
E'en of one moment, 'twixt the blows elapse!

Ray. Ere from these walls they issue to the camp,
At dawn of day, both to the church will go
To pray Heav'n's aid to their tyrannic arms:
There shall they both be slain.

Gu. What do I hear?
In God's own house? . . .

Sal. Yes, in the house of God.
What victim can we offer up to Heav'n
More welcome than an immolated tyrant?
Is he not evermore the first to mock
Man, laws, and nature, and e'en God Himself?

Gu. Thou speakest truly: yet, . . . with human blood
To desecrate the altars . . .

Sal. Human blood,

The blood of tyrants? They on human blood
Feed ever. For such monsters shall there be
A sacred refuge? Turpitude be safe
There, where eternal justice has its throne?
Were they both clinging to their Maker's image,
For this I would not sheathe my lifted sword.
Gu. The people, who behold with other eyes
Actions like these, with thund'ring voice will call us
Irrev'rent, sacrilegious homicides.
This universal prejudice alone
Our enterprise may thwart, or wrest from us
All its advantages . . .
Ray. This prejudice
May, on the other hand, assist our purpose:
There is no superfluity of time:
To-morrow we must strike them down, or never.
That which we need, is to ensure the blows;
Nor any place adapted to ensure them
Is there like this.—Consid'rest thou the people?
More than with anger, with astonishment
All innovation they are apt to view.
We will give orders, that, at the same moment
In which we draw our swords, the sacred temple
Shall echo with the mighty name of Rome.
Gu. 'Tis true, the name of Rome may do much here.—
But, which of you the honor shall obtain
Of the first blow? What post shall I fill up?
Wrath, impulse, courage, here alone suffice not;
Rather, a will extravagantly warm
May injure here.—A cold ferocious valor,
A prompt and steady hand, a face unmoved,
A heart that has been train'd to human blood,
A mute inflexibility of lip;
Men should have these who are tyrannicides.
A motion, nod, or look inopportune,
Nay, e'en a thought, may break the fatal charm,
The prince's confidence may take away,
Time for the deed, the perpetrator's courage.
Ray. We have ourselves arranged the first attack:
The first blow shall be mine: to quench their thirst
Then the less resolute shall venture forth

Soon as the dastard tyrants fall to earth,
Welt'ring in blood, and praying for their lives.—
Father, the signal heard, if thou repair
Where stands Anselmo, thou wilt aid us much,
Far more than in the temple; from whose shelter,
Soon as the blow is struck, we shall rush forth.
I grieve that I alone cannot at once
Both of them slay.—O! what said'st thou, my father?
A prompt and steady hand? This steel to-morrow
Shall sooner fail, than my right hand and heart.

Gu. Why emulating thee can I not strike?
'Tis true, too true, alas! that, weak with age,
My trembling arm to my untrembling heart
May give the lie.—Thou art a light from Heav'n
To dissipate my doubts: thou hast thought well,
For all hast well provided; and in vain
I speak. It pleases me that the first blows
Ye have awarded to yourselves alone.
How much I envy you!—I only fear'd
Thou wouldst refuse, with victims so impure,
To stain thy sacerdotal hand . . .

Sal. How ill
Thou knowest me! Behold my dagger; see'st it?
'Tis no less sacred than the hand that grasps it:
The holy Sixtus, having bless'd it first,
To me consign'd it.—Yes, full many a time
One hand has grasp'd the crosier and the sword:
And, to crush tyrants or offending nations,
The mighty God of battles has Himself
Arm'd the infallible, and dread right hand
Of His anointed priests. These arms I grasp,
These consecrated, homicidal arms,
Shall hang one day an off'ring on these altars.
A fury more than human hath inflamed me:
And, though I bring an arm unused to blood,
To-day shall Heav'n inside the wicked heart
Which I have chosen to transfix, conduct it.

Gu. And thou hast chosen then? . . .

Sal. Lorenzo.

Gu. Ah!
The most ferocious?

Ray. Though I had preferr'd
To slay the strongest, yet have I agreed
In this to please him. Furthermore, I thought
That most assuredly the abject Julian
Would fence his cowardice in hidden mail;
Whence, as the enterprise most difficult,
Him I accepted. Thou shalt have Lorenzo;
The guilty Julian is my destined prey:
E'en now I grasp him: now within that breast,
Receptacle of treachery and fraud,
The sword I plunge up to the very hilt.—
The signal to unsheathe, and to assault,
Will be the sacred moment, when, by hymns
Chanted in whispers, from His high abode
The Son of God mysteriously drawn down,
Enters the consecrated elements.—
Now, thou know'st all: as soon as thou shalt hear
The tolling of the sacred bell, rush forth;
And then remember, that our enterprise
Has been defeated, or is perfected.

Gu. I will do all.—Let us now separate:—
O Night, who art decreed to be the last
Of servitude or life, haste on thy course!—
Do thou meanwhile inflexibly, O son,
Distrust Bianca: love doth often make
A woman's heart consummate in discernment.
And thou, O Salviati, recollect,
That if thy first blow should be found abortive,
Lorenzo is not one to give thee time,
Or opportunity, to aim a second.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

RAYMOND, BIANCA.

Ray. What wouldst thou now? withdraw to thy apartments:
Leave me; I shall return here presently.

Bi. And may I not go with thee?
Ray. No.
Bi. Ah, why? . . .
Ray. Thou canst not.
Bi. Dost thou disregard me thus?
O dear departed days, where are ye gone?
Then from thy side thou didst not banish me;
Nor didst thou ever move, but I moved with thee!—
Wherefore do I displease thee? and in what
Have I offended thee? Thou fliest from me,
And, what is worse, thou driv'st me from thy presence.
Ah, then, the sound of this my once-loved voice,
No longer reaches, much less penetrates,
Thy heart? Unhappy I! . . . I will pursue thee,
If only at a distance . . .
Ray. But, what fear'st thou?
Or what dost thou suspect? . . .
Bi. Thou know'st.
Ray. I know
That thou lov'st me, that thee I also love;
Love thee indeed far more than thou dost think.
My lips divulge it not; but ev'ry gesture,
My looks, my countenance, my heart declare it.
Now, if I chase thee from me, or avoid thee,
I do it, since I wish to grieve thee less
With my calamities: . . . what solace, say,
Canst thou give me?
Bi. Cannot I weep with thee?
Ray. To see thee waste away thy life in tears,
In useless tears, redoubles my affliction.
I fly from all society, thou seeest;
And to myself am burdensome.
Bi. I see
Far more than this; too certainly I see
That thou mistrustest me.
Ray. I tell thee not
All my misfortunes? . . .
Bi. Thy misfortunes, yes;
But not their remedies. With some great scheme
Thy heart is laden. And thou deemest not
hat thou shouldst tell it me? Conceal it, then.

I ask of thee alone to follow thee;
And thou refusest it? I may, perchance,
A little help; but never injure thee.
Ray. . . . What say'st thou? . . . Nothing in my heart I hide . . .
Except my rage, as useless as 'tis ancient.
Bi. But yet this long uninterrupted night,
Which scarcely yet the rising dawn disperses,
How different, how very different,
Was it to thee from all preceding nights!
Not one brief moment did calm sleep descend
Upon thy weary eyes. Thou closedst them,
The better to deceive me; but the thick,
And frequent pantings of thy breast, thy sighs
Suppress'd by force, thy face alternately
Inflamed with fire, or bathed in hues of death; . . .
All I observed, yes, all, for love watch'd with me:
I'm not deceived, in vain thou wouldst conceal . . .
Ray. And vainly dost thou rave.—Above my head,
'Tis true, no genial and profound repose
Spread forth its wings; but this oft happens to me.
And who the blessedness of sleep enjoys
Where tyrants dwell? Eternally on high,
Above the head of slaves, a naked sword
Hangs by a slender thread. Save idiots, here
No other men repose.
Bi. What wilt thou say
Of thy so sudden starting from thy pillow?
Is this thy wonted hour? The shades of night
Were undiminish'd yet, when thou already
Hadst leap'd abruptly from thy bed, like one
Whom unaccustom'd care consumes. Towards me
Did not I see thee afterwards direct,
Sighing, thy pitying eyes? and, scarcely risen,
Thy children one by one embrace? What say I?
Nay, rather to thy breast a thousand times
Glue them, devouring them with eager kisses;
Convulsed with agony, did not I see thee,
With copious torrent of paternal tears,
Their little breasts and faces inundate? . . .
Thou, erewhile so ferocious? Thou, a man

Whose eyes are never visited by tears? . . .
And shall I think that in thy heart thou hid'st not
Matters of most momentous consequence?
Ray. . . . I wept? . . .
Bi. And thou deniest it?
Ray. . . . I wept? . . .
Bi. Thy pupils still are running o'er with tears.
If in this breast thou shedd'st them not, ah, where? . . .
Ray. Feel, feel, these eyes are dry: . . . no tears are there . . .
And, if erewhile I wept, . . . I wept the fate
Of the poor children of an outraged father.
Must I incessantly not weep their birth,
And their existence?—Hapless little ones!
What fate in this long death, which we call life,
Awaits you! To increase your infamy,
Ye are at once the tyrants' slaves and nephews . . .
I ne'er embrace you, but I weep for this . . .
These pledges of our love, let them be dear
To thee, O consort; since I, with a love,
Love them too diff'rent from thy love, and now
Too ill-adapted for these times corrupt.
Yet, notwithstanding, weep their destiny; . . .
And, to their father, take especial heed
They be not like, if it can comfort thee,
Rather to bring them up to servitude,
Than to the practice or the love of virtue.
Bi. O Heav'ns! . . . what words! . . . My children! . . . ah! . . . in danger? . . .
Ray. If peril rises, I to thee confide them.
Do thou withdraw them from the tyrants' rage,
Should it be ever needful.
Bi. Woe is me!
Now I perceive, I understand, and now
Am certain. Thou art come, O fatal day!
Now is the mighty enterprise mature:
Thou wouldest change the state.
Ray. . . . And if I would,
Have I the strength for such a deed? Perchance
I wish it; but, these are but sick men's dreams . . .
Bi. Ah! ill thou feignest: those belovèd lips

Are not accustom'd to deceive thy consort.
That thou dost undertake a mighty task,
My terror tells me; and those manifold
Tremendous workings of thy countenance,
That in a crowd in quick succession throng,
Despairing agony, compassion, rage,
Hatred, revenge, and love. Ah, by those children,
Which thou, spite of thyself, dost so much love;
Not by myself, O no! for I am nothing;
But by thy eldest child, our growing hope,
Our mutual precious hope, I do conjure thee;
At least, in part, reveal to me thy thoughts;
Only convince me thou'rt exempt from danger,
And I am pacified: if 'tis not so,
Suffer me at thy side. Ah! how can I
E'er save thy children, if I do not know
What peril threatens them? I prostrate fall
Before thy feet; and I will never rise,
Till thou dost speak. If thou mistrustest me,
Slay me at once; if, on the other hand,
Thou dost confide in me, why art thou silent?
I am thy wife; and nothing else: ah, speak!
Ray. . . . Lady, . . . O rise! Thy terror represents
Dangers to thy affrighted phantasy,
At present far removed. Arise; return,
And stay beside our children: I to them
Will also come ere long: leave me.
Bi. Ah no! . . .
Ray. Leave me; 'tis my command.
Bi. Abandon thee?
Ah! rather kill me: by no other means
Shall this fond grasp be loosen'd . . .
Ray. Cease.
Bi. O Heav'ns! . . .
Ray. Desist; or I . . .
Bi. I will pursue thy steps.
Ray. Unhappy I! Behold my father here;
Behold my father.

Scene II.

GUGLIELMO, RAYMOND, BIANCA.

Gu. What dost thou do here?
There are who now expect thee at the temple;
And meanwhile idle here? . . .
Ray. Heard'st thou? I go;
What dost thou fear? Ah stay! detain her, father:
I fly, and soon return.—To thee, Bianca,
I recommend our children, if thou lov'st me.

Scene III.

GUGLIELMO, BIANCA.

Bi. What words! Unhappy I! to death he flies!
And thou forbiddest me to follow him?
Cruel . . .
Gu. Stay, stay; be pacified; ere long
He will return.
Bi. O cruel one! Is this
Thy pity for thy son? Thou leavest him
Alone to meet his death, and thou his father?
Abandon him if thus thou canst; but ah!
Stop not my steps; loose me, I follow him . . .
Gu. Thy going now would be mistimed, and late.
Bi. Late? Ah! it then is true, that he attempts . . .
Ah! tell me . . . Speak, or let me go . . . Where flies he?
To some most dang'rous enterprise, I know;
But ought I not to hear whate'er affects
One who's a living portion of myself?
Ah, ye indeed remember more than I
The blood from which I spring! Ah, speak! I am
Now fashion'd of your blood: I do not hate
My brothers, no; but I love Raymond only;
I love him much as human heart can love;
And now I fear for him, lest, ere he take
The state from them, they take from him his life.
Gu. If this be all thou fear'st; and since thou seem'st
To know so much already; be assured
Less doubtful is his life, than that of others.
Bi. O Heav'ns! are, then, my brothers' lives in danger? . . .

Gu. Tyrants are never safe.
Bi. What do I hear?
Alas! . . .
Gu. Think'st thou that one can wrest the state
From those possessing it, and not their lives?
Bi. My consort then, . . . would treach'rously . . . my kindred? . . .
Gu. Yes, it behoves us treach'rously to spill
Their blood, ere ours they treach'rously quaff:
And to the hard extremity by force
They have compell'd us. Yes, at any moment
Thy spouse and children might be taken from thee:
Ah, thence 'twas indispensable for us
Their cruel purpose to anticipate.
Myself, thou see'st, to aid the enterprise,
Have girt the sword, so many years disused,
To my enfeebled side.
Bi. Ferocious souls!
Dissembling hearts! I could not have believed . . .
Gu. Daughter, what wouldest thou? Necessity
To this compels us. For us to retract
'Tis now too late. Put up what vows to Heav'n
Thou likest best: meanwhile departure hence
Is not allow'd to thee: thou'rt guarded now
By many armèd warriors.—If thou art,
As thou shouldst be more than aught else, a mother,
Return to thy poor children, ah! return . . .
But now, methinks, I hear the sacred toll
Of the lugubrious bell . . . I'm not mistaken.
O son! . . . I fly to liberty, or death.

Scene IV.

BIANCA, *armed Soldiers.*

Bi. Hear me . . . O how he flies! And I am forced
To tarry here? In pity let me go!
This is the only breast that, interposed,
Can staunch that sea of blood . . . Are your hard hearts,
Barbarians, inaccessible to pity?—
Impious, flagitious, execrable marriage!
I ought to have foreseen that blood alone

Could finish such immeasurable hate.
Now I perceive why Raymond could not speak:
In truth, thou hast well done to hide from me
Such unimaginable wickedness:
I thought thee capable of high revenge;
But never of an abject treason, never . . .
What tumult do I hear? . . . O Heav'ns! . . . What shrieks!
Methinks the earth doth shake! . . . With what a loud
And clamorous dissonance the air resounds! . . .
The name of liberty, of liberty,
I hear distinctly . . .[1] Ah! perchance already
My brothers are no more . . . Whom do I see?
O Heav'ns! Is't Raymond? . . .

Scene V.

RAYMOND, BIANCA.

Bi. Wretch! what hast thou done?
Speak. Com'st thou back, perfidious spouse, to me,
Thy guilty dagger reeking with my blood?
Who would have ever thought thou wert a traitor?
What do I see? Alas! from thy own side
The blood spouts forth in ample streams? . . . Ah! husband . . .

Ray. . . . Bianca, . . . scarcely . . . I . . . support myself . . .
Sustain me . . . Dost thou see? That blood, which bathes
My sword, it is the tyrant's; but . . .

Bi. Alas! . . .

Ray. This is my own blood; . . . I . . . in my own side . . .

Bi. O frightful wound! . . .

Ray. Yes, frightful; I myself
With my own hand, inflamed by too much rage,
Inflicted it . . . I threw myself on Julian:
And planted in him so, so many wounds,
That I . . . with one . . . at last . . . transfix'd my side.

Bi. O fatal cruelty! . . . O mortal blow! . . .
How many of us hast thou slain at once!

Ray. I told thee not, O spouse . . . Ah! pardon me:
Thee should I not have told; nor shouldest thou

[1] The soldiers retire.

Have heard of it, till it was done: . . . and yet,
At all events, I was constrain'd to do it . . .
It grieves me that to consummate the deed
My strength allows not . . . If it was a crime,
I come to expiate it with my blood,
Before thine eyes . . . But, do I hear the cry
Of liberty more fervently resound?
And I can nothing do! . . .

Bi. O Heav'ns! and . . . fell . . .
Lorenzo . . . also? . . .

Ray. A most strict injunction
I gave to his assailant for this purpose . . .
I shall die unlamenting, if I leave
Safe, and in liberty, . . . my sire, . . . my spouse, . . .
My children, . . . and my fellow-citizens . . .

Bi. Thou leavest me to tears . . . But, can I live?
Give me thy sword . . .

Ray. Bianca . . . O sweet spouse . . .
Part of myself; . . . remember, thou'rt a mother . . .
Thou for our children shouldst consent to live;
Live for our children, . . . if thou lovedst me . . .

Bi. O children! . . . But the tumult grows apace? . . .

Ray. And it approaches; . . . and I seem to hear
Discordant cries . . . Run to the little ones,
And leave them not: to their protection fly.—
And now, . . . for me . . . no hope . . . of life . . . remains.—
Thou seeest, . . . that . . . I am . . . a dying man . . .

Bi. What shall I do? . . . Near whom shall I remain? . . .
What do I hear? The cry of "Slay the traitor!"
The traitor, who? . . .

Ray. The traitor, . . . is . . . the vanquish'd.

Scene VI.

LORENZO, GUGLIELMO, BIANCA, RAYMOND, *and a reinforcement of Soldiers.*

Lo. Slay him!

Ray. O sight!

Bi. And dost thou live, my brother?
Have pity . . .

Lo. Here the miscreant sought a refuge;

And slunk from danger to his consort's arms;
In vain. Drag him by force . . .
Bi. My spouse! . . . my children . . .
Ray. Thou manacled, O father? . . .
Gu. And thou wounded?
Lo. O! what do I behold? thy faithless blood
Thou sheddest from thy side? Now, who forestall'd
My arm?
Ray. Mine; but it err'd: this was a blow
Aim'd at thy brother's heart. But, he from me
Had many more like this.
Lo. My brother's dead:
But I live, yes, I live; for killing me,
A soul unlike that of an inexpert,
Unlike that of a perjured dastard priest,
Was needful. Salviati lifeless fell;
And with him fell his comrades: I reserved
Thy father only, that to see thy death
Before receiving his, might swell his pangs.
Bi. What boots this cruelty? He languishes
Half dead . . .
Lo. And thus half dead, do I exult . . .
Bi. He bears the punishment of his offence.
Lo. What do I see! Dost thou embrace a wretch
Stain'd with thy brother's blood?
Bi. He is my husband; . . .
And he is dying . . .
Ray. Now, . . . why thus beseech him?—
See, if thy death were trusted to my power,
If thou wouldst live.[1]
Bi. O Heav'ns! what hast thou done? . . .
Ray. I . . . never . . . strike . . . in vain.
Gu. My son! . . .
Ray. O father!
Imitate me. Behold the steel.
Bi. 'Tis mine . . .
Lo. No, it is mine[2] . . . Thou slayer of my brother,

[1] He plunges into his heart the dagger which he had hidden at the arrival of Lorenzo.

[2] He wrests the dagger from the hand of Guglielmo, who had taken it up as soon as Raymond threw it to him.

How many other deaths, O steel, art thou
Ordain'd to give!
Ray. My wife, . . . farewell . . . for ever.
Bi. And shall I live? . . .
Gu. O dreadful sight!—Quick, quick,
Put me to death: why dost thou hesitate?
Lo. Go now to thy degrading punishment.—
Meanwhile, by force from that unworthy neck
Remove the weeping lady. Time alone
Can soothe her grief.—And time alone can prove
That I'm no tyrant, and that these are traitors.

XIII.

DON GARCIA.

THE ARGUMENT.

Cosmo de' Medici, born in 1519, became Duke of Florence in 1537, and afterwards the first Grand Duke of Tuscany. He was a member of a collateral branch of the great house of Medici, whose fortunes culminated under Lorenzo the Magnificent, and became extinct in 1519, the year of Cosmo's birth. He was a stern and successful ruler. He with his wife Eleonora, and his three sons—Diego, the eldest and his heir, Piero, and Garcia—constitute the sole characters in the play. The occurrences on which it is based took place in 1562.

At the commencement, Cosmo consults his three sons as to what course he should adopt with regard to his cousin Salviati, whom he looks upon as the only, yet most dangerous, enemy of his dynasty. Diego recommends that he should be put to death openly; Garcia recites the history of the family, and strongly advises a conciliatory course. Piero, the youngest, himself of a deceitful character, urges his father to dissemble with Salviati and to promote him, when he will doubtless soon exhibit himself as a traitor and give Cosmo a just excuse for getting rid of him. Cosmo approves the advice of Diego, and reprimands Garcia for his language. When the three brothers are alone, Diego, who is haughty by nature, quarrels with Garcia, and they almost draw swords against each other. Piero interferes and Garcia departs; when Piero artfully irritates Diego against him as their mother's favorite, and hints that she is endeavoring to supplant Diego in Cosmo's favor.

Cosmo next praises Diego to Eleonora as their most worthy son, and blames her for her excessive love of Garcia, whose conduct he denounces, whilst she defends him. Piero enters and says that he has important private news to communicate to his father; and when Eleonora has left, he recounts the late quarrel between his brothers, and does all he can to irritate Cosmo against Garcia. Cosmo tells him that he is aware that Garcia is an intimate friend of his own enemy Salviati, and Piero in reply announces that he has discovered the real cause, namely that Garcia is in love with Salviati's daughter, Julia. Diego joins them, speaks kindly of Garcia, and asks his father to excuse the latter for their late quarrel. Cosmo laments to himself the inferiority of Garcia to his other sons, but blames Diego for his lenity in interceding for him, as not indicating a character fitted to succeed him on the throne.

He now sends for Garcia, and pretends that on consideration he is converted to Garcia's views about Salviati. Garcia is delighted at his father's change, and acknowledges to him his love for Julia, which, however, he says Salviati opposes. Cosmo then turns round, avows that he has been feigning all the time, and commands Garcia, under penalty of his own death, to allure Salviati into the palace and slay him there with the sword he gives him for the purpose. Garcia is distracted. Eleonora enters when Cosmo has gone, and Garcia confesses his love, and tells her of his father's cruel orders. He urges her to place Julia in safety, and intercede with Cosmo, which she promises to do. Piero now comes and acquaints Garcia that Cosmo has already put Julia into chains, with orders to have her killed if anything is done in her favor. Piero urges him to kill Salviati as the only means of ensuring Julia's safety, and at length persuades him to agree to that course.

Diego is next seen on his return from hunting, and asks Piero the meaning of the excitement in which he has just seen Garcia. Piero tells him that Garcia was on his way to a secret council with Salviati, to conspire against their father, and advises him to hide himself in the neighborhood and learn what passes between them. He adopts Piero's advice and departs. Garcia enters, and Piero

conceals himself. Garcia soliloquizes over the treacherous deed he is contemplating, and of which he repents. Eleonora joins him and says that she is sent by Cosmo in Piero's absence, to see if Garcia is preparing to kill Salviati, and that in the meantime Cosmo is holding a dagger over Julia. He, in terrible distress, hastens to consummate the deed, and Piero, advancing, exults in the success of his stratagem. Garcia returns, tells him he has slain Salviati, and in proof shows him his weapon covered with blood.

In the last Act, Cosmo enters and Garcia acquaints him with Salviati's death. Cosmo says that in reward he shall marry Julia. Garcia spurns her hand as the price of blood. Cosmo demands proofs of Salviati being indeed dead. Garcia repeats the story, when Cosmo says that he has evidence that Salviati had not been in the place that night, or ever contemplated going there. Garcia is wild with terror. Cosmo goes to make further enquiries. Eleonora appears and urges Garcia to fly from his father's fury. Cosmo rushes in with his drawn sword, surrounded by his guards, announces that the murdered man proves to be Diego and not Salviati, and slays Garcia, who with his dying breath proclaims that both he and Diego are the victims of Piero's treachery.

This tragic story is based on the history of the times, which relates that Cosmo's eldest son, Giovanni (here called Diego), who had been made a cardinal by the Pope, died suddenly while on a hunting expedition, and that he was supposed to have been killed by his brother Garcia, who was killed by Cosmo in return. Eleonora, their mother, died soon afterwards, and Cosmo was accused of having stabbed her. His own account was that his wife and both sons died of a pestilence. Botta, in his History of Italy (book xii.), disbelieves the whole story. Alfieri states in his Life that in August 1776 he happened to hear some literary persons mention the historical anecdote of Garcia being slain by his father, Cosmo I. The fact struck him, and, as it was not in print, he procured the manuscript extracted from the public archives, and then planned the tragedy, sketching out the characters as follows:—

"Cosmo, cruel, choleric, loves Giovanni, hates Garcia; Leonora, good mother, loves all her sons, especially Garcia; Giovanni, proud, disdainful; Garcia, courageous, sincere, loves all, but will not let Giovanni dictate to him; Fernando (called in the play Piero), flatterer of his father and Giovanni, hates both of them, understood by his mother."

The author thinks that if the scene of the tragedy had been, instead of modern Pisa, ancient Thebes, Mycene, Persepolis, or Rome, it would have been deemed tragic in the first degree; but the subject loses much of its perfection from the want of real grandeur in the characters and of sublimity in the causes of such unheard-of crimes. He mentions that he is rather ashamed of having himself invented the unhistorical character of Piero, the third son, who is, after all, the real hero of the play; but his introduction was necessary for the thread of the story and for bringing about the catastrophe. He calls attention to the fact that two personages of much importance to the plot, Salviati and Julia, do not once appear, as they would have made the play too long, and he thinks this a good theatrical precedent. On the whole he is pleased with his work, and prefers it to *The Conspiracy of the Pazzi*, on account of the subject in itself being warmer, more passionate, and more terrible. (*Parere &c.*)

Sismondi's criticism is confined to a summary, in a few lines, of the argument of the play.

DON GARCIA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Cosmo.	Piero.
Eleonora.	Garcia.
Diego.	*Guards.*

Scene.—*The Palace of Cosmo in Pisa.*

ACT I.

Scene I.

COSMO, DIEGO, PIERO, GARCIA.

Cos. O sons, ye are not now assembled here
In a light cause: 'twill be most grateful to me,
Since to the test ye now will all be brought,
To make a trial of your sev'ral skills.
But, each of you, ere I divulge my thoughts,
Swear to me solemnly to speak the truth,
And in the bottom of your hearts to hide
The secret which I now to you unfold.
Di. I swear it by this sword.
Pi. I by my father.
Gar. I swear it by my honor.
Cos. Hear me then.—
My cause is yours: let not your hearts admit
Hate, love, or passions, which are not my own.
Such I esteem you; hence I do not think
That any counsel more than yours will serve me.
'Twere bootless now to recapitulate
Wherefore the gay inhabitants of Florence

To me are irksome; wherefore I retired
To seek in these belovèd walls of Pisa
A calmer dwelling-place, ye all well know.
From hence with safer and as tight a curb
I equally control the turbulent,
Malignant, factious, faithless multitude,
Unfit to rule, unwilling to obey;
Yet their obedience is no longer doubtful:
Although, on this account, I do not sit
Securely on the throne. Our ancestors
Often encounter'd formidable perils;
And ev'ry object to my heart suggests
A warning whisper, that I should not trust
A transient sunshine, a fallacious calm.
For the most part my foes have been subdued,
Dispersed, or slain; I see alone of these
One formidable now remain behind:
He is allied to me in blood, in mien
Conciliatory; though I heed it not,
He evermore pursues me like my shadow.
Modest in words, obsequious in his manners;
But, in his inmost heart, replete with rage,
And circumventive purposes . . .

Di. He is?

Cos. The impious Salviati.—What though he
Be my near relative; although the son
Of my own mother's brother, he no less,
Than was his father once, is our sworn foe.
That fierce old man, (ye've heard me speak of him)
Who preach'd of liberty, because the throne,
Although he wish'd it, was beyond his reach:
He, who attempted to dissuade me from it,
E'en on the very day on which I was,
By the concurring senate and the people,
Invited to the throne. My mother's tears,
And his extreme old age, a pardon gain'd
For his presumption and audacity:
But this contested sceptre he not thus
Could ever pardon me. What could he do,
An impotent old man? The messengers
Of death he heard, and sinking to the tomb,

That ineffectual poison in his heart
Which he conceal'd, e'en to the very dregs
He pour'd it in the heart of his vile son.
Now, I am sure that, son of a scorn'd father,
He hates me bitterly; and, what is worse,
He speaks it not: hence vigilance in me
Is indispensable. My mother maybe
Was, while she lived, a hindrance to his views;
Now that she's dead, we should no more delay:
We should not only wrest from him the power
Of hurting, but attempting it. The means,
The best and speediest for attaining this,
Freely let each of you point out to me.
Di. Father, and lord, not only of ourselves,
But of all here; what can I say to thee
Of policy of state, which thou know'st not?
Methinks who pleases not his lord, of guilt
Is, by this fact, sufficiently convicted:
What then is he who, hated, hates again?
Say, has a monarch relatives? Since fate,
When she bestows a throne, denies all friends,
Excepting such as impious are, or false;
A prince should never tolerate a foe,
Neither an open foe nor foe conceal'd.
From him take warning who before thee held
The Tuscan sceptre; Alexander, he
Who died, by treach'ry butcher'd; he should teach thee
E'en more than others to distrust relations.
Feign'd amity, and long-feign'd services,
And consanguinity, at length bestow'd
On that perfidious one, Lorenzo, means
To plunge his dagger in the royal breast.
The prince in part of his malignant mind
Was well aware, yet would he not mistrust him:
Nay, he caress'd him, made him of his friends,
So that at last he slew him.—Ah! forestall
The hate of others: lenity, display'd
By those who can dispense with it, alone
To terror is attributed: and kings,
More than all thoughts, should hide their thoughts of fear;
'Tis the most jealous mystery of state:

Woe, if it be discover'd: thence at once
The fears of others cease: and then, what happens?—
'Tis my advice that Salviati perish;
But let him perish in the eye of day.
Thee he offends, and thou condemn'st him justly:
But, suffer not obscure and timid clouds
To intercept the vivifying rays
Of thy unlimited authority.
Gar. If to a prince born on the throne, and thence
Beneath the tranquil shade of prosp'rous fate,
Amid the luxuries of court matured,
I here were call'd upon to speak, my father,
Thou wouldst not hear from me a long address.
To mould the monarch who has never seen
The threat'ning aspect of adversity,
Would be a vain, impracticable task.
But, Cosmo, thou, who from the throne afar,
And from its hopes, amid vicissitudes,
Hast pass'd thy youthful years; on Tiber's banks,
Now on the shores of Adria, now in turn
'Mid lonely rocks of the Ligurian Alps,
Long hidden by thy mother; finally,
Thou, who hast felt the weight of pow'rful hatred,
Lend me, I pray thee, a benignant ear.—
For many years have fortune, art, force, favor,
Given the Medicæan race, by turns,
An uncontrollable authority;
To which more splendor, strength, security,
Thou hast since added ev'ry day. Thou knowest
That Alexander's slayer hoped in vain
In a free state to meet with an asylum.
Thy sword in Venice reach'd him: unavenged
He fell there, where impartial laws alone
Maintain authority: and in his claws
The mighty Leo saw the suppliant slain,
Who in his roaring placed too firm a trust:
He saw it, silently: thy dreaded name
Made either sea that bounds Italia tremble.
What more dost wish? a throne without a foe?
That never was: to slay them all? hast thou
A sword to do such prodigies? Reflect

Upon thy ancestors: which of them died
Beloved and mighty, in tranquillity?
Cosmo alone; he who enjoy'd what power
To him was delegated; he whom power
Sought in proportion as he sought it not.
Think of the others: Julian put to death;
The bold Lorenzo scarcely saved alive;
Piero banish'd: Alexander slain.
Yet, these of blood were never avaricious.
Ah! these impressively suggest to thee,
How slipp'ry is the basis of that throne
Founded on blood.—Thou'lt Salviati slay,
Maybe not guilty: other foes will rise:
Shall they be slain? still others will succeed.—
Suspicion's sword at length will turn its edge
Insatiable 'gainst him who grasp'd the hilt.
Ere it descend, hold it aloft a little:
Strike but one blow, and it will rest no more.
Him who at once offends thy fame and thee,
O father, do thou pardon.

Di. Ever thus
From me he differs.

Pi. I, in years inferior,
And thence in wisdom, since my sire commands,
Will, notwithstanding, speak. Diego's words
Are, like his actions, bold; nor do I blame,
Although my judgment utterly dissents
From his, the sentiments that Garcia utter'd.
I, at the very name of Salviati,
Which sounds to me like guilt, profoundly shudder.
Another Salviati dared to aim
At our Lorenzo the perfidious sword.
Father, I only grieve that hitherto
Thou hast too openly his foeman been:
Not that thou e'er couldst change that double heart,
By showing greater affability;
But, now and then it happens that a prince
Incurs less blame when he destroys his friends,
Than when he punishes his foes.—But one,
Of the so many deaths with which the rage
Of vile Tiberius ne'er was satisfied,

One only was acceptable to Rome.
Whether Sejanus's conspiracy
Was true or false, his obsequies were mark'd
With taunts, and songs, and smiles, and public joy.
Friend to the prince, the foe to all besides:
Thence unavenged, abhorr'd, and base, he fell.—
Wouldst thou at once have Salviati slain,
And stop the comments of invidious tongues?
Do what thou hast not heretofore attempted.
Feign love to him; of pity thou dost rob him:
Promote him; a large field for fault thou givest:
Reward him; he will be at once a traitor.
Beneath the semblance of just punishment
Thus cloak revenge; and thus the prince obtains
His object, and the name of merciful.

Cos. Yes, one may reign with counsel such as this;
But thine, Diego, I esteem more regal.
He who can think it possible to govern
Without deceit or terror, is a fool.
Little a son's, and less a prince's thoughts,
Garcia, in thee I recognize: speak'st thou
To Cosmo king, of Cosmo citizen?
Wouldst thou that on the throne I recollect
My cruel destiny?—And I will do it,
By baffling the attacks of adverse fate.—
What strange perplexing jargon dost thou use?
Thou callest terror, prudence? abjectness,
Thou call'st humanity? and when I ask thee
How I may slay my mortal enemy,
Dost thou instruct me in the means to save him?

Di. Garcia, my younger brother, born to serve me,
It is no wonder should he not possess
A spirit correspondent to the throne;
And if he meek and private qualities
Profess, or feign . . .

Gar. Virtue will always be
The same; for subjects and for kings the same.
Question'd, I spoke my thoughts: if such a soul
As thine be requisite to royalty,
I feel rejoiced that I expect no sceptre:
And if, as thou allegest, I was born

To serve, a willing servant will I be,
But his alone who knoweth how to rule . . .
Cos. And I am he: and do thou recollect
That I know how to make myself obey'd:
Love and respect Diego as myself.—
I sought alone to know your sentiments,
And not to be advised. I saw, I knew,
I heard: enough.—To you, in words and deeds,
And even thoughts, I only now am law.

Scene II.

DIEGO, PIERO, GARCIA.

Gar. He from our deeds, far more than from our words,
Between us can discriminate.—But yet,
I feel no grief that I have thus reveal'd
My judgment to my father: to my lips
Perchance the feelings which my heart contains
Should run less volubly; but hitherto
I have not learn'd the talent to suppress;
And now I fear it never will be mine.
Di. What more doth Cosmo want? Within his palace,
Among his sons, he finds a lofty censor
Who teaches him to reign.
Gar. What fearest thou?
Thou ever wilt be more acceptable
To him than I. To kings those are most welcome
Who best know how in their sword's edge to place
Their reason and advice.
Pi. Why should your anger,
Because ye differ in opinion, thus
Transgress all bounds? I too dissent from you;
I love you not the less on this account.
Brothers, and sons, and subjects of one father
We all three are: and so . . .
Gar. Let each of us
Indulge his own opinions: praise I seek not;
Nor cast I blame on others. Certainly,
I say, that we shall all the grievous load
Of public hate endure, if Cosmo choose
To use deceit or force: from this will rise

The scorn of others, and from that their rage;
Their vengeance from them both.
Di. O! wise and great
Assuredly thou art: it pleases thee
To sit as moderator of our youth.—
Now, when wilt thou be silent? To our father
Thou wert already known; by him already,
In such esteem as thou deservest, held.
Go; if thou lovest darkness, live obscure:
But, since thou addest nothing to our brightness,
Make us not shadows of thy central gloom.
Gar. I call that infamy which thou call'st splendor.—
But, my words cannot rob you of that peace,
Which is not in yourselves: peace ill is bought
With universal cries; ill with the blood
Of guiltless citizens. A stranger I
Am 'mongst you born; but, having been so born,
Hope not that I shall ever hide the truth.
Pi. Thou art not, Garcia, to thy sire a foe:
Then why a friend to him that does offend him?
Gar. A friend of justice, and of nothing else.
To you I thus address myself; but keep
Tow'rds strangers an inflexible reserve.
I'm willing to believe that one sole lord,
Where he doth keep himself within the pale
Of natural rights, doth suit a people best;
But tyranny?... It is my execration:
And ah, my father doth too much affect it!
I ever was more tender of his honor,
Than of his pow'r: with a true love I love him.
And if o'er him my prayers will not avail,
They shall be turn'd to lessen tyranny.
Di. And I (if I avail) will concentrate
My efforts all to give stability
To sacred pow'r, which this rash rebel dares
To stigmatize unjustly.
Gar. The design
Is worthy of thyself.
Di. Dost thou insult me?
I'll make thee...
Pi. Stop: O Heav'ns! replace thy sword..

Gar. Permit him to display his sword, Piero.
He gives a worthy sample of himself.
A hopeful omen of his future reign,
His sword against his brother!
Pi. Ah, refrain . . .
And thou, be silent! . . .
Di. Change thy style, or I . . .
Gar. I clearly see: anger in thee supplies
The place of reason. I am not incensed,
Whom reason only moves.
Di. Perchance thou art
More backward in performance than in speech;
Hence art thou not incensed.
Gar. Far more am I
To terror, than to action, indisposed.
Di. And who knows this?
Gar. My sword;—and thou shouldst know it, . . .
If I were not thy brother.

Scene III.

DIEGO, PIERO.

Di. Thou, my brother?
We evermore were too dissimilar . . .
Pi. Appease thyself; thy generous resentment
He merits not. Heard'st thou his insolence?
Heard'st thou how proudly he exults in treason,
Much less then blushes at it?
Di. Thou shalt see
One day, that he will be compell'd to smother
His foolish pride: wait till I reign, and then . . .
Pi. To thee, 'tis true, the throne belongs by right;
But, not by accident speaks Garcia thus.
Well know I, that my father hath reposed
All his affection, all his hope in thee;
To him art thou far dearer than his eyesight;
But, he descends tow'rds the decline of life.
Thou know'st how love in aged hearts grows cold;
How feebly hoary age defends itself
'Gainst female stratagems. This Garcia is
His mother's darling: she's possess'd by him;
And loves us little, as thou know'st . . .

Di. What fear I?
The throne to me is due; not e'en my sire
Could take it from me. Grant that he could do it,
I should suffice to re-obtain it. Well
Our father knows us.
Pi. It is true; but art . . .
Di. Art to the vile I give. I know that he
Is too dear to our mother. Equally
Were he to Cosmo, should I heed it? no!
I fear not, hate not, envy not my brother.
Pi. But, thou know'st not what culpable designs
Within his heart hides Garcia . . .
Di. Do I ever
Investigate the purposes of others?
Pi. But unknown to our father . . .
Di. And would I,
Think'st thou, repeat them to him? That would be
In me far viler than in other men:
Since angry menaces have pass'd between us,
Each word of mine would seem like craft, or vengeance.
I know my father; and am well aware
How little he is able to subdue
The first assaults of rage: to fatal proof
'Twere better not to bring him. If now Garcia,
Left to himself, grows worse and worse, then let him
Alone abide the consequence of this.
But, if again he ventures to offend me,
I hope that he can never say that I
Have sought redress from any but himself.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

COSMO, ELEONORA.

Cos. No, I am not mistaken, no: a son
More worthy than Diego we possess not:
The honor of the throne, his father's safety,
The universal peace, he has at heart.

I had indubitable proofs of this
From his own lips a little while ago.
Ele. Then hast thou never in my Garcia found
Love, judgment, gentleness of character,
And pliancy of heart?
Cos. What words are these?
How dost thou designate that rebel spirit?
Among my sons, he is the only one
Unworthy of the name. What do I say,
Among my sons? Far, far more than by him,
By ev'ry other am I loved and rev'renced.
A serpent, who turns all his rage against me,
And his dire poison, in my breast I cherish.
How difficult it was, when list'ning to him,
My fury to restrain! Surmise is now
Matured to certainty: this Garcia is . . .
Ele. What has he done? What has he said? In what
Offended thee? Alas!
Cos. What has he said?—
Whilst of a mortal foe I plan the death,
He dares to counsel me to pardon him.
Thence, much as I abhor him, he abhors not
The guilty Salviati? Thence my foes
Are not his foes?
Ele. And is not ev'ry man
Thy subject who dwells here? If this, or that one,
It pleaseth thee to slay, dost thou not do it?
'Tis in a son a pardonable crime
To supplicate his sire to be less cruel.
'Tis true that nor Diego nor Piero
From bloodshed dared dissuade thee: Garcia dared:
What doth this indicate, except that he
Is more benignant, and for human blood
Pants not?
Cos. This overweening, ill-placed love,
More than it ought to do, thy judgment blinds.
Thou mak'st an idol to thyself of Garcia;
Save him thou lovest, and thou seeest nothing.
What I call crime, thou dar'st in him call virtue?
This altercation is not new between us;
But ev'ry day it more displeases me.
And thou wilt make an effort to myself

No little grateful, if within thy heart
Thou hide a love so partial and unjust.
Ele. An unjust love? Ah! if there be who thus
Can prove it to me, I at once will change it.
Not on the words, but actions of my sons,
My observation has been fix'd.
Cos. So be it;
If then, in spite of me, thou will'st it, let him
Be dear to thee; so that I never more
Hear thee excuse his failings. In my palace,
The first and only virtue is to please me:
This virtue hitherto I see not in him:
It doth belong to thee to teach him this;
To thee; . . . if thou sincerely lovest him.
Ele. And hath not Garcia always bent his brow
To thy behests?
Cos. What merit hath obedience?
And this sufficeth, then? And not to do it,
Who now would have the hardihood?—He ought
To speak not only as I speak; but ought
To think e'en as I think: he who has not
A nature like to mine, should change it; yes:
Not simulate, but change it. Of my race,
And of my realm, I am the head; the soul
Am I, with which each living creature here
Is animated.—Nor, on guilty Garcia,
Had he not been my son, had I bestow'd
Even a warning ere I punish'd him.
Hence is his crime assuredly augmented;
But yet once more, before his chastisement,
Once only will I make him hear a voice,
That from perdition's path may rescue him.

Scene II.

COSMO, ELEONORA, PIERO.

Pi. Father, a pressing matter brings me to thee:
With thee I would confer at leisure.
Cos. O!
What strange disturbance read I on thy face?
Speak; what hath happen'd? say.

Pi. I cannot speak it,
Except to thee alone.
Ele. What can a son
Have of mysterious for a father's ears,
Which even his own mother must not know?
Cos. I am a father, it is true, but also
I am a prince: nor hast thou hitherto,
Madam, with me my public burdens shared;
Nor wouldst thou share them, if, as I suspect . . .
Ele. Thou dost suspect the truth. Scarcely had I
The native shores of my Sebetus quitted,
Than I, become the sharer of thy days,
All my attachments, all my objects bounded
Within these royal walls. In me thou gainedst
A consort, and a handmaid, nothing more.
Well saw I that my lord thought ev'ry proof
Of love was centred in a blind obedience:
Hence always I obey'd; this thou know'st well;
Often in tones of gratitude hast thou
Praised me for this.—Wouldst thou remain alone?
I leave thee: and already I infer
From him who tells it, what this secret is:
And I know why I only should not hear it.
But I wish not to hear Piero's tongue,
Possessing such alacrity to injure:
If only to the detriment of strangers
It were exerted, I should not at least
Then tremble at it, as I tremble now.
I, of his well-known arts, am doubtlessly
A most unwelcome witness.
Pi. Thou hast placed
All thy maternal fondness on one son:
Hence are the others guilty; and, meanwhile,
Hence do I suffer heavy punishment;
On me alone, forsooth, it all must fall!
My tongue is evermore prepared to injure?
This, thy beloved son asserts, to whom
I bear no hatred, though I envy him;
Let him confess, if, or in word or deed,
I ever injured him.—A horrid stain
Thou fixest on me, mother: yet should I,

If any other than my mother fix'd it,
Be more afflicted; or if any one
Heard it, besides my father and my lord,
To me imputed. But I know my duty;
I ought to suffer and to hold my peace;
I suffer, and am silent.
Cos. Madam, wouldst thou,
With manners such as these, in tumult throw
Our palace?
Ele. Ah, that others would not do it!
And hath not an abominable pest
Already fix'd its residence among us?
I yield my place: and may I never know,
And never thou believe, his odious secrets!

Scene III.

COSMO, PIERO.

Cos. Piero, speak.
Pi. My mother's prophecies
In part are true. An execrable pest
Rises among us.
Cos. Where I reign, no pest
Exists that can mature: e'en from the roots
It shall be torn up: speak.
Pi. I know full well
That all depends on thee: of ev'ry wound
Thou art the sov'reign healer; hence I seek
In thee alone a speedy remedy.—
Erewhile there rose, 'twixt Garcia and Diego,
A war of words: their fury with great pains
I check'd; but certainly 'tis not extinguish'd.
Inflamed, and fierce, went Garcia out: with prayers,
Mingled with force, Diego I restrain'd:
Ne'er the aggressor will he be, no never;
But, from the other, if one look escape,
One word, one gesture to provoke him; Heav'ns!
I tremble to reflect on what may follow.
Cos. Perpetual discord; I already knew it:
But what fresh cause impell'd them on so far?
Pi. When thou erewhile didst quit us, we remain'd

In earnest conference. Diego, fired
In words, as well as deeds, with noble ardor,
With that imposing frankness he possesses,
His brother Garcia blamed with openness,
(And blamed, methinks, not wrongfully,) that he,
Alone, dared in thy presence to defend
The guilty cause of Salviati. Pierced
E'en to his inmost heart (for the rebuke
Was too well founded), Garcia had recourse
To threats against his brother: and had he
Outraged Diego only . . . But, to thee
I ought not to repeat that which escaped,
While hot with passion, from his breast: and maybe
He thought it not; for anger sometimes leads us
To utter that which is not. And to me,
While I essay'd to reconcile them both,
He darted pungent and injurious words:
But, this imports not.—'Tis expedient now,
That he should hear the thunder of thy voice,
So that this contest gain no further strength.

Cos. There is no doubt; all things convince me of it:
Garcia, that impious son, betrays his sire,
His lord, his honor, and himself, at once.
He would, by this aggression on Diego,
Obliquely wound his father: he assumes
Blind confidence from blind maternal love;
And to the highest pitch audacity
In him is raised. Erewhile, I wish'd to hear
If he would venture plainly to disclose
The vile and guilty friendship in my presence,
That he hath long encouraged in his heart:
And it is not, O no! to me unknown,
As much as in his folly he doth think.

Pi. Thou, then, indeed dost know it, that he is
Clandestinely of Salviati? . . .

Cos. Yes;
I know it; thoroughly convinced . . .

Pi. Himself,
Against his will . . .

Cos. And why have ye conceal'd
It hitherto from me?

Pi. He is our brother . . .
Cos. And am not I the father of you all?
Pi. I hoped, indeed, that to the path of duty
He would return; and still I dare to hope it.
Still in that unripe age are we, thou seeest,
When man most easily is led astray.
Each of us might, caught in such snares, become
Guilty of equal failings.
Cos. Ah! no snares
Could ever make you traitors: for ye both,
Diego, and thyself . . .
Pi. Diego, never;
I hope so of myself; and ev'ry man
Affirms it of himself while he is sane.
But, who can answer for the consequence,
If love, the enemy of reason, rules him?
Cos. What say'st thou? Love!
Pi. If thou reflect on this,
Less heinous will his fault appear to thee.
Cos. Love, say'st thou? Love for whom?
Pi. Thou know'st it, father.
Cos. I know that he's a traitor; that he oft
Dares meet in secret interview, at night,
With Salviati in my palace, here:
But that love prompted him, I never knew.
What may this love be? Speak.
Pi. Unhappy I! . . .
I would excuse him; and I have accused him.
Cos. Speak: I command thee; and hide nothing from me,
Or I . . .
Pi. Ah! father, pardon him, I pray,
This youthful indiscretion, and ascribe
Nought in him to an evil disposition.
Love only makes him seem a traitor. He
Loves guilty Salviati's guiltless daughter:
The gentle Julia, whom thou hast perchance
Retain'd a hostage for her father's faith,
'Mongst the illustrious damsels in thy court;
Julia he loves: she, soon as seen, inflamed him.
He loves her secretly; and, loved again,

He lives in sweet though ineffectual hope.
Now, that the father of a maid beloved
Should not appear as guilty to her lover,
Why should this seem so wonderful to thee?
Cos. All men, then, know the errors of my sons
More than myself? All men excuse them? hide them?
His partial mother incontestably
Is privy also to this guilty secret;
And seconds it perchance . . .
Pi. In truth, I think not . . .
But yet, I do not know.
Cos. This seeming love,
What can it be, except a specious veil
For future treasons? Can my son be dear
To Julia for his own sake? Is she not
The daughter of my foe? And hath she not,
E'en with her milk, hatred for me imbibed,
And for my blood? Deep treasons are conceal'd
Beneath this love: the daughter, doubtlessly,
Is made an instrument of his revenge
By the shrewd father; I am not mistaken.
And my own son? . . .
Pi. Perchance thou readest well
Their inner souls; but think it not of Garcia:
A fervid love assuredly excites him;
And the blind guide doth often not conduct
To a good path: perchance he hence has err'd.
Now that thou know'st the whole, do thou restrain him,
But with a gentle rein: do not so act,
That I with reason may regret to-day
That I've betray'd, although by chance I did it,
The jealous secret of his love. 'Tis true,
He never told it to me; but he is
Reserved to all, and most so to his brothers:
But yet, I knew it.—Now, since I have said it,
Turn it to his advantage. Wean him, father,
From this disgraceful fondness; and at once
Appease his unjust rage against his brothers.
Cos. Thou hast done well to speak: as son and subject,
It was thy duty; I shall seek to know
More of this matter. But, Diego comes.

Scene IV.

DIEGO, COSMO, PIERO.

Cos. My son, what wouldst thou? Justice? Thou shalt have it.

Di. Father, what ails thee? On thy brow austere
Sits dark displeasure. P'rhaps our strife hath wrought
Disturbance in thee? It had been, Piero,
Better indeed for us to hide it from him:
And what? Fear'st thou that for my brother's insult
Anger in me all limits would transgress?
Ah, let my father think no more about it,
Nor let it raise in him resentful feelings.
I do not feel offended; I but pity
Him who offends me: this is my revenge.

Cos. O, thou art worthy of a better brother
Than Garcia is! Fraternal injuries
Thou dost endure; and it becomes thee well:
But, that he has infringed my laws, that he
Erewhile contended with thee, this is not
The first sole cause of my profound displeasure.
His turbulence, I clearly see, springs not
From the impetuosity of youth;
'Tis the worse fruit of a malignant heart:
I am compell'd e'en to the fountain-head
Of the death-bearing pestilence to go;
I am compell'd to search into the whole,
The whole to hear. It is of vast importance
To know the deeds, affections, and the words,
The enterprises, e'en the secret thoughts,
Of one, a royal youth, who, more than others,
Has pow'r to injure, and who less may fear.

Di. Yet, do not now ascribe to guilt in him,
I pray thee, that which erewhile, when incensed,
He said to me.

Pi. Thou seeest clearly, father,
If Garcia had a corresponding soul,
Peace would be permanent betwixt them both;
Nor doth Diego feign . . .

Di. Nor hitherto
Have I supposed that Garcia ever feign'd,

Or was malignant. No, my father, no;
Although he differ from me, I perceive
The seeds of virtue in him; I esteem him
As having only from the path of duty
Perchance a little stray'd: he cherishes
Private affections in his princely nature;
Hence are those words of his, which seem so strange;
Hence he so frequently dissents from us;
Hence the injurious lofty pomp, with which
He preaches to us his ascetic virtues.
I first, inflamed with anger, in thy presence,
Calling him hypocritical and false,
Dared to assault him: to a lofty heart
Such contumely was insupportable;
And scarcely had my anger been appeased,
When I repented of it. I come here,
In the first place, expressly to recant;
And, if the words I utter'd have aroused
Thy prejudice against him, to remove
Impressions sinister, as they are false.

Cos. Garcia assuredly is less a traitor,
Than thou magnanimous.

Di. We are thy sons . . .

Cos. Thou art, indeed: Piero, and thyself.

Pi. At least, I pride myself in thinking so.

Di. Ah! do not deem thy other son yet lost:
I do beseech thee, to thyself, and us,
Reclaim him, father; but with gentle treatment.
Advice, far more than force, will operate
On his tenacious heart; and never show him
That, less than us, thou lovest him.

Cos. Enough,
My sons, enough. Withdraw: I will indulge you.
Ere long to me, Piero, hither send
Thy brother Garcia; I will speak to him.—
Nor do I less commend in thee, Piero,
The strict solicitude, than in Diego
The magnanimity sublime of heart.

Scene V.

COSMO.

Cos. O worthy pair of sons!—What star of mine
Has join'd to you a third so different?
Though I deem'd Garcia guilty, I ne'er deem'd
His guilt was so atrocious.—But, meanwhile,
With what impression ought I to behold
Diego, who, though destined to command,
Speaks but of pardoning received offences? . . .
It grieves me to be forced to praise in him
That with my tongue, which in my heart I blame . . .
But yet he is a novice in the arts
Of government; in time he'll be more wise:
I see within him all the qualities
That form a perfect prince. I must instruct him,
By my example, that, to govern well,
The less we should forgive, the more the ties
Of blood are found existing; and the more
Offender and offended are allied.

ACT III.

Scene I.

COSMO, GARCIA.

Gar. See me, O father, at thy call.—Thy words,
If it be lawful to anticipate,
With prompt and humble filial deference,
I now, by first accusing my own fault,
May somewhat mitigate thy just displeasure,
And my own shame. O, could I thus appear
A little less unworthy in thy eyes
Of pardon! nought else in the world I wish.
Stung by Diego, I insulted him;
I do regret this deeply; nor couldst thou
A punishment inflict that might compare
With my repentance. Dearer to thyself,
Older than I, and by long habitude

Of all my actions the appointed censor,
Diego should find nothing else in me,
But full obsequious silence, patience, peace.
Cos. What I would say to thee, thou hast in part
Forestall'd; but not the whole. It pleases me
To hear that from thy breast all hate is banish'd;
Whate'er may be its cause, I feel no wrath
Paternal, that subsides not at thy words.
I never yet have entertain'd a doubt,
But that the rage would be no sooner cool'd,
Which to exasperating words impell'd you,
Than that both instantly would come to me
To make atonement. Now there doth arise,
To cancel the first strife, betwixt you both
The nobler strife of self-disparagement;
Whence I absolve you both, and neither deem
Guilty in this.—I further now would speak.—
Within my mind have I revolved thy counsel,
Which, as inopportune and indiscreet,
I blamed this morning. Thou shalt now see proof
That the first judgment is not always best:
E'en in proportion as I meditate,
'Mid various other sentiments, on thine,
Less they displease me. Not that I believe
That I should blindly trust in Salviati;
Too much he hates me: but he also fears,
And fears effectively. Had I the power
To introduce betwixt our mutual hate
A valid obstacle; or to devise
Such ties as might reciprocally join us
In firm alliance; in one word a means,
Whence common interests might league us both,
And make us both secure; I might perchance
Not only wean my heart from schemes of blood,
But further, with conciliatory thoughts
Dispose it to relent . . .
Gar. What do I hear?
Can this be true, my father? What a tide
Of lofty transport inundates my breast!
Not that I dare found the presumptuous hope
On my opinions, that I can instruct

My sov'reign lord; but genuine joy I feel
To be convinced, that, to obtain his ends,
My father rather chooses to use means
Of gentleness, than menaces and blood.
In him who reigns, stands all; he, at his will,
Can mitigate, or strengthen, fear or hate
In all his vassals. Ah, could he but fully
Eradicate them from the hearts of others,
And from his own! But, fate to kings forbids it.
Cos. But, what would be the consequence, if I
With too great mildness should reproach myself?
Gar. Was a good heart e'er self-reproach'd for this?
Nor shouldst thou fear that injury to thee
Can thence result. The customary hate
Of those by royal prejudice pursued,
To Salvati is unknown. He knows
That he has forfeited thy grace for ever:
He hath no hope, nor hath he any fear,
To check his projects: for himself he fears not;
He, when he lost thy favor, lost his all.
Yet, notwithstanding this, he doth propose
To all his deeds, one uniform condition,
How he may please thee best: and thou by means
Direct canst never lose him, if thou dost not
Take indirect ones to indulge thy rancor.
Cos. There are, then, who deceive me? . . . O sad lot
Of those who are most mighty! How ferocious
Have others represented him to me!
Here, all are emulously fraudulent;
And each one to his private projects makes
My pow'r subservient . . .
Gar. It is known to all
That Salviati's father was thy foe;
Hence each one emulously paints his son
To thee an infamous, perfidious rebel.
Cos. Ah, thou dost speak too truly! Ill a prince,
If others penetrate his heart, can know
The hearts of other men. — But tell me further:
Whence dost thou now so accurately know
What are his dispositions? Although he
Has follow'd me to Pisa, in my court

Him have I never seen: what do I say,
In court? all human converse he avoids,
And drags on such a solitary life,
That one would say, that he in secret broods
O'er heavy incommunicable thoughts;
And that of ev'ry man he is mistrustful.
Gar. If it were lawful, I would say . . .
Cos. Speak on:
The truth is pleasing to me; I delight
To hear thee.
Gar. In thy footsteps here he came,
But only to remove from thee all doubt
Of his fidelity; for in the midst
Of factious spirits, with whom Florence teems,
Thou always wouldst have held that faith precarious.
With him sometimes I have had interviews;
This I deny not: ah, hadst thou but heard him!
His heart surcharged with bitterness and anguish,
With what respect and fear he mourns thy error!
And, never thee, but thy perfidious friends,
The persevering foes to truth alone,
He blames for this; and even deems not thine
Thy own suspicions . . .
Cos. But that thou'rt my son
He knows; how tell thee this? . . .
Gar. Perchance he thinks me
Of pity capable . . .
Cos. I understand:
Thy influence with me in his favor . . .
Gar. He
Knows that my words with thee are ineffectual . . .
Cos. Thou hast perchance divulged to him thy secrets:—
Thou, always sad, and, like himself, alone:—
P'rhaps common sympathies unite you both.
Pitying thy wrongs, as thou dost pity his,
He does not hate my blood without exception?
He hears thee, speaks to thee? far different . . .
Gar. Yes, different from that which fame reports him.
Thou dost inspire me with a hardihood,
Which I had never of myself assumed.
Know, that thy dearest friend, (choose whom thou wilt

'Mongst those whom thou with honors and with gold
Hast laden, surfeited I will not say,)
I swear, is less devoted to thy service;
And loves thee less; and less would risk for thee,
Than that obscure, degraded Salviati,
Assured in heart of his own innocence,
Which, to increase the burden of his woes,
He's not allow'd to prove. If, when disgraced,
He such is found, reflect what he would be
If worthily esteem'd.
Cos. . . . This man, in truth,
Hath roused a tender int'rest in thy heart:
Thy words are strong, yet hence I blame thee not.
Since thou assertest it, he must at least
Have some good qualities: but, speak; and speak
The truth; thou know'st not how to lie already:
Now do his virtues only thus excite
Thee to commend him?
Gar. Ah! since thou dost think
I know not how to lie, I will not now
E'en partially conceal from thee the truth.
Love also rouses me: I burn for Julia;
And hence have double pity for the father.
Cos. And he knows this?
Gar. I told it him.
Cos. He aids thee?
Gar. No, he condemns it: I condemn it also.
Ah! what dost thou suppose me?
Cos. Circumspect;
But, not in time.
Gar. Love doth not blind me, no;
Nor doth it rob me of integrity.
I speak to thee in praise of Salviati,
Since in subservience to his principles
He holds all selfish int'rests: otherwise
I would have represented him to thee,
If I had found him otherwise; were he,
As he is adverse, to my love propitious.
I have not learn'd to varnish o'er the truth:
Nor do I even with a latent hope
Foster the passion that consumes my vitals;

Which neither I will nourish in my heart,
Nor ever can extinguish. Well I know
That thy inflexible and austere will
From Julia parts me, and eternally.
Pity from thee I do not ask: too well
I know, for this incurable deep wound
I have no other remedy than death!
I have entreated for her guiltless father,
For such I know he is; but, were he not,
Love would ne'er lead me to betray my own.

Cos. Perfidious, I would hear from thy own lips
The whole:—but, thou speak'st not the whole to me.
Thy love for Julia is thy least offence.

Gar. O Heav'ns! What do I hear? Must I ne'er deem
Goodness in thee sincere?

Cos. Thou never shouldst,
Thinking of thee; no, never! Fully thou
Dost know thy heart; thou, traitor.—I erewhile
Have sought the means, whence I might take away
That miscreant from my eyes: and fortune now
Brings them to me; and indicates at once
The instrument. Is it thy wish to clear
Thyself of turpitude in my opinion?
Wouldst thou that I should deem love thy sole crime?
Little of this declining day remains:
At the first gath'ring of the shades of night,
Let guilty Salviati come unknown,
Clandestinely, within my palace walls,
As heretofore he has been wont to come;
Do thou invite him; and do thou conduct him
To the accustom'd haunt, in which so oft
He has conversed with thee: and there do thou
(Woe fall on thee if thou refuse me this!)
Plunge in his breast this sword.

Gar. O Heav'ns! . . .

Cos. Be silent.
Thou hast betray'd thy sire, thy lord, thyself:
This is the penalty. What? when I order,
Dar'st thou resist?

Gar. And dost thou stand in need
Of other hands more infamous for this?

Cos. I have selected thine: let that suffice.

Gar. I will first perish.
Cos. Say not so: my hand
Grasps the sure earnest of thy prompt obedience.—

Scene II.

GARCIA.

Gar. What looks! . . . Alas! . . . O father, hear . . . O words! . . .
But, of what earnest speaks he? Through each vein
I feel an unaccustom'd chillness creep:
P'rhaps he alludes to Julia? Yes; what pledge
Can vie with her? O Heav'ns! . . . What do? . . . I run . . .

Scene III.

ELEONORA, GARCIA.

Ele. Son; whither dost thou go? Ah, stay; to me
Interpret the mysterious words of Cosmo.
Hither hath he dispatch'd me to assist thee;
Wherefore? Say what has happen'd? . . .
Gar. O my mother! . . .
What did he say to thee?
Ele. "Go; give advice
"To thy belovèd Garcia; now he needs thee;
"And make him recollect." Nor added more;
But with a countenance more discomposed
Than ever I beheld in him, pass'd on.
Now speak; delay not; what has happen'd?
Gar. Mother,
Know'st thou this sword?
Ele. I, at thy father's side,
Have always seen it hang: and what of this? . . .
Gar. This is an instrument of government:
Ah, were it Cosmo's only! Ne'er should I
With it contaminate my guiltless hand!
But to my hand, alas, my cruel father
Himself consign'd it; and insists that I
Plunge it by stealth in Salviati's breast.
Ele. What do I hear? O Heav'ns! . . . But, why to thee
Commits he such a terrible revenge?

Gar. He only chooses me because I feel
Pity for Salviati; and because
I am not yet contaminate with blood;
Because the daughter, the unhappy daughter,
Of that unhappy father, I adore . . .
Ele. What hear I? Julia!
Gar. I love Julia; yes;
And indiscreetly I myself declared
That love to Cosmo: hence in him arose
The' unnatural wish, one worthy of him only,
To make the father of the maid beloved
Die by the lover's hands. Time serves not now
To say to thee how I was first enthrall'd
By so much beauty, join'd to so much virtue;
Nor, if I told it, wouldst thou blame it, mother;
I only now assure thee, that I love her,
And that I will far sooner sacrifice
My own life than her father's.
Ele. Ah! . . . my son! . . .
Alas! . . . What sayest thou? . . . What shall I do? . . .
O fatal love! . . . Although I love thee far,
Far more than aught besides, I cannot praise it.
Gar. Julia is ever at thy side, O mother:
Thou knowest well, and equally dost prize
Her rare accomplishments; and thou dost love her
More than all other damsels of thy court:
Thence thou mayst well infer that I deserve
At least to be excused, if not commended.
But, if thou rather wilt, then blame me: never
Have I displeased thee, mother: I have held
Thy smallest wish inviolably sacred.
And I, if from my heart I cannot drive
This love, can moderate its ecstasies.
I only ask of thee that thou wouldst save
That heav'nly and defenceless innocence
From Cosmo's pitiless and fatal grasp.
I wish to save her, not to make her mine.
Incensed, and loading me with frantic threats,
Cosmo departed hence: perchance one crime
Will not suffice to his ferocious heart;
P'rhaps Julia too . . . O Heav'ns! . . . Ah, mother, fly;

If I was ever dear to thee, go now,
Watch o'er my love. Who knows? . . .
Ele. Thy love excites
In thee excessive fear.
Gar. All may be fear'd
From Cosmo's deadly rage: thou yet hast time;
Thou hast the remedy; it now behoves thee
His fury to delude; 'twere vain to soothe him.
As best it may be done, deliver Julia;
And meanwhile feign that I am now almost
Prepared to yield: time, and nought else, I ask.
In fine, thou art a mother; and the love
Thou bear'st thy son shall animate thy heart.
Thou oughtest from so horrible a crime
To save a son; thou oughtest to deliver
From unjust violence a guiltless maid.
Thou see'st me humbly now give way to tears,
And supplicate, while yet a hope remains:
Woe, if my father goad me to revenge;
Woe, if he dare to wreak his rage on her,
In whom alone I live! Whole streams of blood
Shall then be shed to inundate the palace;
And this my arm shall shed it. Then no more
Shall I hear reason; then no more shall deem
Myself a son . . .
Ele. Ah, calm thyself; what say'st thou?
Thou seeest things that are not: far from thee
Be e'en the thought of such extravagance . . .
Gar. Do thou, O mother, then anticipate
That which thou canst not afterwards prevent.
From this severe extremity, to which
I'm driven by my father, do thou find
Some method of escape for me, that I
Be not a traitor.
Ele. Yes, son, yes; but calm
Thy irritated soul: to him I fly.
Ah, may I change his horrible resolve!
Julia I will at least in safety place,
To give thee peace. Meanwhile I interdict
Thee from attempting aught till I return.

Scene IV.

GARCIA.

Gar. If Julia is not safe, I will do nothing.—
Alas! what do I hope? that to cheat Cosmo
My mother may avail, who bears the marks
Of apprehension in her ev'ry look? . . .
O, from what father am I sprung! Alike
Crafty and cruel, he can be deceived
As soon as moved to pity . . . Yet, he will not
Have wreak'd his rage upon the timid maid,
Ere he has learn'd that I refuse to strike
The wicked blow . . . And I, shall I consent? . . .

Scene V.

PIERO, GARCIA.

Pi. Brother, what hast thou done? Alas! . . .
Gar. What ails thee?
Pi. In truth I now do pity thee sincerely.
Gar. Now? . . . What has happen'd?
Pi. O unhappy brother!
Cosmo doth threaten thee, and darkly frowns,
Pronouncing thee a traitor.
Gar. Such I am not.
Pi. But yet, my father is exasperate
Beyond all bounds. He hath already summon'd
Into his presence Salviati's daughter,
Laden with heavy and opprobrious chains . . .
Gar. O Heav'ns! Vile tyrant . . . I will rush . . .
Pi. Ah! . . . Where?
Gar. To drag her from unworthy chains.
Pi. Thou mayst
Drag her to horrid death, by thy imprudence.
Under the penalty of death he gave her
Into the custody of cruel Geri.
If he, by whomsoever it may be,
Perceives the smallest action in her favor,
Geri is bidden instantly to slay her
With his own hands . . .
Gar. We soon shall see . . .

Pi. Ah, stop!
What wouldst thou do?
Gar. ... To slay her? O distraction! ...
But, had my mother not appear'd before him? ...
Pi. She came erewhile; but then the cruel order
Had been pronounced. She sought to speak to him;
But her indignant consort silenced her:
She wept; but tears, he told her, were not wanted:
He said: "To exculpate himself from all,
"I to thy Garcia have consign'd the means."
Gar. From what, from what, to exculpate myself?
Being thy son? Indelible that blot.—
Gave me the means? Thou see'st what means: this sword,
Which in the breast of wretched Salviati
I am appointed treach'rously to plunge.—
Ah, Cosmo, why am I a son of thine?
Ah, were I not, this sword would then, indeed,
Be the best means to exculpate myself.
But against thee I cannot; O distraction! ...
Against myself ...
Pi. What wouldst thou do? Desist ...
Gar. Rather than see that much-loved maiden dragg'd
To ignominious death; rather than be
Polluted with her father's blood, I here
Will kill myself ...
Pi. Ah, pause; ... attend to me; ...
Reflect that Cosmo is unchangeable.
He, at all risks, wills Salviati's death:
And if from thee he wills it, by thy death
Thou sav'st not him; but rather keepest him
For pangs more exquisite: ah, well thou knowest,
Whether, because defrauded of its means,
Cosmo's revenge abates. The guiltless daughter,
Perchance she too ...
Gar. O Heav'ns! ...
Pi. But why perchance?
It is too sure! If thou refuse obedience,
Father and daughter he will immolate.
Gar. Thou mak'st me shudder with excess of horror.
But how can I destroy, and treach'rously,

An innocent just man? How hither draw
At night, and under the flagitious mask
Of simulated amity, a friend,
The father of the woman I adore? . . .
Pi. Ah! surely such extremity as thine
Was never heard before; nor are there minds
So firm, as not to shrink from such a trial.—
But yet, what wouldst thou? What else canst thou do?
Each other course would be far worse than this.
Let one alone expire; that were the best . . .
Gar. And shall I live? . . .
Pi. Ah! . . . hear me. He's the culprit,
Who forces thee to such a crime, not thou.—
But, I can still in part diminish for thee
The horror of this stratagem, if thou
Permittest that the messenger be sent
By me to Salviati in thy name.—
Resolve; resolve at once: and O! reflect
In what unutterable agony
Thy Julia languishes . . .
Gar. Belovèd Julia! . . .
And shall I kill thy father? . . . No, I cannot . . .
Yet, if I slay not him, I murder thee . . .
For I can neither perish nor avenge thee,
And scarcely can I save thee!—But, I ought,
Ere I resolve, once more to hear my mother:
Perchance my grief, my rage, my desp'rate love,
May point another path.
Pi. Ah no! . . .
Gar. But yet,
If 'tis my fate, that I this horrid crime . . . —
Hear me: if I return not in an hour
Hither to thee, it is indeed too true
That I was forced to choose to immolate
The father of my Julia.—Then I leave
To thee, since thou wilt have it so, the task
To send the impious messenger of death.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

PIERO, DIEGO.

Di. Say; what does Garcia in his thoughts revolve?
For, like a man whose reason is bereft,
I saw him come, and go, and come again.
Pi. Dost thou not know that he . . . ?
Di. What should I know
Of him? Thou see'st that from my fav'rite woods
Weary and breathless I return. I know
That I bring back rich spoils: I know nought else.
But, like an arrow darting silently
And swiftly by me, Garcia tow'rds me cast
Inflamed and furious looks. Say, what new rage
Invades his heart?
Pi. Ah! 'tis not new: for he
Always avoids, blames, envies, even scorns thee,
Whenever he can do it. P'rhaps to see thee
Of all thy regal ornaments divested,
As now thou art; without thy sword beside thee;
And, in thy aspect, rather like to one
That dwells in forests than a monarch's son;
P'rhaps this excited him to cast upon thee
Such supercilious glances. Evermore
That which he does not, he condemns in others.
Di. 'Tis a propensity, methinks, more royal
To hunt wild beasts in the adventurous chase,
Than, evermore immured 'mid pond'rous volumes,
Wrapt in soft indolence, to learn to fear.
His supercilious looks excite my pity.—
But, whither goes he in such wondrous haste? . . .
Pi. Great projects he revolves. His father now
He seeks in haste, now to his mother flies,
And thus employ'd, with zealous speed improves
The interval. Diego absent, I
Excluded from these interviews; thou seeest,
The moment is propitious for his schemes.
I know no further: but the guilty friendship

Of Garcia and this Salviati, once
Call'd treason, now is call'd a slight imprudence:
That oft-repeated railing talk with thee,
Which once was insolence, in other language
Is designated now a youthful fire:
And that contempt for individual power
Which he professes openly, I hear
Now call'd a thoughtless eccentricity.—
Just indignation ev'ry day I see
Arise in Cosmo: but the senile flame
By female artifice is soon extinguish'd.
In short, this morning Garcia heard himself
Pronounced a traitor: and this very day
(Before 'tis closed) he hears himself from all
Exculpated, defended, and exalted;
And even yet, perchance, he may behold
Himself rewarded.

Di. What indeed does that
Import to us? Shall I afflict myself
That Garcia gains once more my father's favor?
P'rhaps this alone may lead him to reform.

Pi. And am I more invidious than thyself
Of other men's advantages? But yet
The treach'ry grieves me, and, e'en more than this,
The fatal and inevitable ruin
Threat'ning our race, our father, and thyself.

Di. Our father? and myself? Say, what would Garcia?
What can he?

Pi. He would reign: and may indeed,
If thou art silent.

Di. Reign? . . . But have I not
A sword?

Pi. Far diff'rent arms he wields. Erewhile,
A transient wrath against himself inflamed thee;
Thou know'st not how to hate, or recollect
The injuries thou suffer'st: but, if others
Conceal them in the bottom of their hearts;
If black and fervid anger rankle there,
Ready at ev'ry instant to explode . . .

Di. But hath not Cosmo that late impious contest
Consign'd to deep oblivion? . . .

Pi. So he deems;
But Garcia otherwise doth think.
Di. —But thou,
Thou seem'st to come to me to stir up strife.—
How can my brother injure me?
Pi. In truth,
I am the brand of discord 'twixt you both:
Do thou, abandoning thy judgment, stand
Securely in thy valor; I, like thee,
Might be secure, if I did love thee less.—
Attribute it to thy propitious fate,
That I discover'd his designs in time.
Now thy security and ours at once
Compel me to develop them to thee:
For, had I wish'd to raise disturbances,
I had divulged them only to my father:
But yet I will go there, if thou refuse
To hear me.
Di. What has happen'd then? Relate.
Pi. The silent night with more than usual gloom
Already is advanced. Within the cave
Which terminates the hollow avenue,
Buried in shade of lofty cypresses,
Thither doth Salviati now repair,
By Garcia bidden, to a guilty council;
Perchance already he is hidden there,
And ev'ry moment there expects his friend.
There they've agreed to fix the means together
Of final vengeance. I have learn'd the whole
From him who was their chosen messenger.
Prayers, menaces, and vigilant espial,
Much art, and bribes, have now disclosed to me
The dreadful mystery: in short . . . But, what
Do I behold? For once at least I see
Amazement stamp'd on thy intrepid face? . . .
Yet, that which I affirm to thee is little:
Be thou indisputably now convinced
By thy own ears: and be thy eyes alone
The witnesses of my veracity.
Di. But what a miscreant is he then? The day,
The very day on which my father pardons

His past offences, new ones he projects?—
He runs to certain ruin.
Pi. But to it
He goads us first. Thou know'st, by Salviati
Thou art not less detested than thy father.
Scarcely will Garcia have divulged to him,
That thou advisedst Cosmo first to slay him,
Than he . . . I tremble to express it . . . Both
Are madden'd with resentment: artifice
To malice will be join'd; for stratagems
The time is opportune: . . . and wilt thou be
Neglectful? Be so, then: I seek my father;
Happen what may.—The method I devise
To obviate more mischief, to procure
Deliv'rance for us all; and thou dost spurn it?
My father shall provide the remedy.
And he, the witness of their trait'rous plot,
Shall go to them with me.
Di. Ah no! desist:
Think that a man can ne'er be the accuser,
Who holds himself not worse than the accused.
By what means wouldst thou that I thwart the traitor?
Speak; I will do it.
Pi. Thou shouldst first hear all:
'Tis easy from detected stratagems
To extricate oneself. Thou mayst alone,
Without the interference of thy father,
When thou hast once convicted him of treason,
Keep, with thy valor, Garcia at a distance;
Inspire his heart with salutary fear;
And even yet to duty's path restore him.—
Ah, go! already is the hour arrived:
Now hide thyself within the gloomy cave;
And there thou'lt hear of unexpected things.
Di. Thou dost compel me to it: and I yield,
Although against my will, that to this place
My father may not be by thee conducted:
He would inflict a too severe revenge.
Pi. Ah, yes! I also tremble at the thought:
Yet 'tis our duty to anticipate
The ill designs of others . . . But, methinks . . .

I hear a noise . . . it is himself: step softly; . . .
'Tis Garcia.—Come; go in unseen; make haste.

Scene II.

PIERO.

Pi. At length he's safely lodged.—I'll hide myself;
And listen to discover, if I can,
Whether this other doth maintain his purpose.—

Scene III.

GARCIA.

Gar. Alas! who doth impel my footsteps hither? . . .
Where am I? . . . This is most assuredly
The cave of death. For a most noble combat,
In truth, O Garcia, thou dost gird thyself.
O Heav'ns! what am I doing? . . . Innocence,
Thou which wert heretofore my only boast,
Thou art no longer mine: the impious blow
I've pledged myself to strike . . . And shall I strike it? . . .
In ev'ry corner of this gloomy cave
I hear a sound of death: and on myself
Alone I cannot now that death inflict? . . .
O cruel destiny! . . . Night's thickest shades
Already cover all things: and 'tis come,
Nay, 'tis exceeded, that too fatal hour:
Assuredly Piero did dispatch
The messenger of death; why should I doubt?
Did he e'er hesitate to do a thing
That might endanger others? The vile message
Too certainly was sent! . . . Unhappy friend!
Thou with security awaitest me,
Within the impious cave, thy destined tomb . . .
Thy tomb? . . . Shall I destroy thee? Never, never.
Why do I grasp thee, hated sword of Cosmo?
Far from me, cursèd instrument! . . .

SCENE IV.

ELEONORA, GARCIA.

Ele. O son! . . .
Gar. Mother, why comest thou? to rescue me
From this commanded crime?
Ele. O Heav'ns! to thee
Thy cruel father sends me.
Gar. What wills he?
Ele. That I should come, alas! to ascertain
With these my eyes, if thou prepare thyself
His orders to obey. This wicked task
Was to Piero giv'n; he found him not;
Hence he chose me . . . alas! And I to him
Am instantly commanded to return;
What shall I say to him?
Gar. That hitherto
My hand is pure: ah, that my lips were so!—
But, if I promised it, I now refuse
That promise to fulfil. Go, tell him this . . .
Ele. O Heav'ns! dost thou not know? . . . If I should dare
To say this to him, thee I should expose
To dreadful danger. He is blind with rage . . .
Gar. Let him be so; and let him murder me;
This I expect.
Ele. And Julia? . . .
Gar. O that name!
Ele. On her take pity: if thou dost refuse it
Both to thy wretched mother and thyself.
Gar. —Go then, and say to him, . . . that I obey:
Meanwhile, without delay my Julia rescue . . .
Ele. Rescue? Does Cosmo trust to simple words?
With his own eyes he here will see the victim.
Ah son! it tortures me to goad thee thus
To an unworthy deed; . . . but yet, . . . reflect . . .
Gar. Is it impossible that Julia then? . . .
Ele. I dare not tell thee all; . . . yet, if I'm silent . . .
Gar. Ah, speak! Unhappy I! Thou mak'st me tremble.
Ele. While I confer with thee, . . . thy father, he . . .

Holds o'er the bosom of the trembling maid
An unsheathed dagger . . .
Gar. O atrocious sight!
Stop, father, stop thy arm; I will destroy him; . . .
Soon I'll return; . . . O, stop! . . . thou shalt behold me
Swimming in blood . . . Where is my sword? . . . the sword? . . .
'Tis here; I fly: . . . O father . . . Heav'ns! . . . I fly.

Scene V.

PIERO.

Pi. O thou disciple of romantic virtue,
Thou too dost tread expediency's broad path!
It were indeed a miracle, hadst thou
Belied the character of all our race.—
Now go; and plunge thou in a guiltless breast
Thy reeking dagger.—What will thence ensue?
I do not know: but, be it what it may,
The knot inextricable, which hath been
By chance and art entwined, the sword alone
Can disentangle.—Let us hear . . . But what?
Do I hear Garcia now return already?
Quickly returns he: should he have repented? . . .
It is not, is not so; for I behold him
Come like a man whom his misdeeds pursue.

Scene VI.

GARCIA, PIERO.

Gar. Who art thou? . . . who . . . presents himself to me . . .
Upon the thresholds of mortality?
Pi. Thy brother 'tis, Piero . . .
Gar. Cosmo's son?
Pi. And thou, art thou not so?
Gar. I am so, . . . yes; . . .
Now that I am a traitor.
Pi. Hast thou slain him?
Gar. Dost thou not see it? by my steps, . . . my gestures, . . .

My trembling voice, . . . the unaccustom'd fear . . .
Which smites my heart? . . .
Pi. I pitied thee before,
And now much more.—But, thou hast saved thy Julia.
Gar. O Heav'ns! who knows if yet my father? . . .
Pi. Hence
I fly to him. Soon as I bring to him
The proof that by thy hand fell Salviati,
Julia will be in safety.
Gar. Proof? behold
My sword; it trickles yet with smoking blood.
Go, take it now . . . Alas! . . . if it should meet
His daughter's eyes, . . . O Heav'ns! . . .
Pi. But, art thou sure
Thou tookest aim effectively? . . . Fell he
At the first blow? And spake he not? . . .
Gar. Fear'st thou
That he is yet alive? Or doth it please thee
To hear from me the fearful narrative,
To fill thy bosom with malignant joy?
Thou shalt be satisfied: then tell my father.—
Soon as I enter'd in the cave, I heard,
And seem'd to see, my victim groping there,
Who had preceded me: I quickly raised
My arm to smite him; but my arm fell down . . .
Already I retreated; when, methought,
A shriek from Julia, like a shriek of death,
I heard, and spite of me it drew me back.
Hearing a footfall, Salviati rush'd
Meanwhile towards the entrance; and approach'd me.
At once I planted, even to the hilt,
The execrable dagger in his heart . . .
One sigh alone, one bursting sigh of death,
Falling, he breathed . . . O horrible to tell! . . .
I felt myself with spouting blood besprinkled:
A death-like chillness crept through all my veins; . . .
And scarcely I . . . restrain'd myself . . . from falling
Upon the bleeding corpse . . . Wretch that I am! . . .
Groping with trembling hands, . . . I scarcely gain'd
The mouth of that abominable tomb . . .
Hast heard enough?—Rejoice now in the news.

Pi. Why shouldst thou wrong me thus?—In one respect
Fortune, at least, has been to thee propitious:
That I alone beheld thee quit this cave.—
My father will hereafter well know how
To give what color serves his purpose best
To this calamity. Time cancels all things;
Even affliction yields at length to time.
If thus my father will'd, the guilt is his:
Thanks, not dishonor, thou shouldst reap from it;
Besides that he especially will wish
For ever to conceal it.—Calm thyself:
Light is a crime, that ne'er will be divulged.

Gar. What, thanks to me?—death now is my desert.
Where shall I hide myself? This guiltless blood,
With which I am polluted and besmear'd,
What could e'er cleanse it? Not my useless tears,
Nor the last drop of all my blood could do it.—
Go thou to Cosmo; give him back his dagger;
Do thou receive his recompenses. Thou
The cruel messenger of death didst send:
Thou didst exult, perfidious brother, thou,
That I became, as thou thyself art, base
And infamous. Thou art the genuine son
Of Cosmo. Go; this instant leave me.—Heav'ns!
Where can I ever from myself escape?...
Where shall I hide myself?... Ah! how shall I
Sustain the glances of Diego now,
Now that he's justified in calling me
A traitor? of Diego, who, though dear
To you, had never been himself a traitor?...
O rage!... O shame that ne'er can be effaced!...

Pi. Thou canst not instantaneously resume
Collected thoughts... Appease thy just regrets:
Meanwhile I will precede thee to thy father.
I hope thy crime will always be unknown
Both to Diego and to all mankind.

Gar. All men shall know it: such a punishment
I have already to myself prescribed,
That false suspicion may not fall on others.
Obtain alone that I, on my arrival,

Find that unhappy Julia is restored
To liberty . . . It afterwards depends
On me to take full vengeance for my crime.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

COSMO, GARCIA.

Cos. Advance, advance still nearer. What? thou tremblest?
Dost thou deserve reward or punishment?
What hast thou done? This instant tell me; speak.
Gar. Before to-day, didst thou e'er see me tremble?
Thou oughtest to be well aware how fear
Ever accompanies a guilty conscience.—
My brief address, O Cosmo, hear. At length
I have, thou knowest, with my dastard hand
Accomplish'd thy magnanimous revenge.
And I was taught to think that Julia's safety
Would recompense the slayer of her father:
For thou erewhile didst generously promise
That I should purchase, by the blood of one,
The freedom of another innocent.
Ah! tell me: hast thou then in truth released
Julia from chains? Will that unhappy maiden
Life and security at least retain? . . .
Cos. Not only I release her, but with thee
Will join her, if thou hast perform'd the deed.
Gar. Join her with me? O crime!—And thinkest thou
That I am so consummately thy son?
Thy son am I; but not to that extent.
If I have treach'rous been, Heav'n knows the reason . . .
Cos. Thou better know'st thyself. But why are now
Thy mad audacity, thy pride, thy threats,
In thee redoubled?
Gar. Why? Defiled with blood,
I am the instrument of thy commands,

61057

And should I not be fill'd with haughtiness?
Since I the guiltiest am of all thy sons,
Am I not now the dearest of them all?
Cos. Miscreant! ere long and thou indeed, shalt tremble . . .
Gar. I trembled, while I yet was innocent:
Now am I reckless. I but ask thee now
Thy promise to fulfil. My destiny
I have already, and for ever, fix'd.
Cos. More fix'd perchance my will. She ne'er shall be
Released, if she is not thy consort first:
Or thine, or in eternal chains. Shall I
Suffer her ancient rancor, her new wish
Her father to avenge, to be hereafter
Her wedding dowry to another spouse?
She's thine alone.
Gar. Alas! what have I done? . . .
O! what art thou? . . . No . . . never . . .
Cos. Cease; this ought
Not to afflict thee now: thou'rt call'd upon
First to convince me that with thy own hand
Thou hast slain Salviati.—Know'st thou this?
What proofs of it canst thou adduce to me?
Gar. What proofs? O guilty grief! doth it not then
Suffice to be a miscreant? Is there need
Also to triumph in committed crimes?
Ah, see my guilt upon my face engraved,
See it exultingly. My desp'rate deeds,
My eyes, my gestures, and the tones of death
Most audible in ev'ry word I utter;
Do not they all express it? And the blood,
With which I am defiled from head to foot,
Yet crimson, smoking yet? . . .
Cos. I see that blood:
But, whose it is, I have not yet discover'd.
I only have a perfect certainty
That it is not the blood that I demanded.
Gar. O rage! dost doubt? . . . Then thither go thyself;
Plant thou thy feet within the dreadful cave;
That wretched victim in a lake of blood
There wilt thou see extended. Go; and feed

On the dire spectacle; go; satisfy
Not thy sight only, but thy other senses:
Touch with thy hand the gaping wound of death;
Feed on his quiv'ring heart; and, tiger, drink
In copious draughts its blood; thy regal rage
Vent to the full upon that lifeless breast.
Once, twice, and four times, nay, a thousand times,
Plunge in that form that can contend no more
Thy doughty dagger: there make noble proof
Of all thy prowess, sceptred hero, there;
Thou hast no other place.—Unheard-of death!
Unheard-of pangs! A parricide am I,
The son of Cosmo, I; and innocent
That Cosmo would account me?
Cos. Who denies
That thou'rt a miscreant? who? Thou, I believe,
Hast kill'd a man; but not the man whose death,
From the complexion of these dang'rous times,
Is no less indispensable than just.
Thou art, but not of that my enemy,
The slayer: more I know not; but ere long
I shall know all; I quickly shall behold,
With my own eyes . . .
Gar. Hast thou not seen Piero?
And said he not to thee that Salviati,
By his contrivance, enter'd first the cave? . . .
Cos. Yes, yes, Piero came; and said to me
That Salviati in that cave this night
Hath never enter'd, nor e'en thought to do so.
Thither I now repair, where thou hast stain'd
The soil with blood. If he has not there fallen,
Tremble thyself. My fury, destined all
To wreak itself on that devoted head,
Who knows? . . . perchance, . . . to-day, . . . may shortly.—
Tremble.

SCENE II.

GARCIA.

Gar. . . . What do I hear? O Heav'ns! that in that cave
The feet of Salviati have not enter'd?

Piero says so? and to Cosmo says it?...
O horrible and fatal mystery!
Whose is that blood, then, that I thus have shed?
O, how I shudder with affright!... But yet,
What other murder were a crime like this?
Ah! were it true that this my impious hand
Had slain all others rather than himself!...
Whom hast thou slain, then?... But, I well remember,
That, when I issued breathless from the cave,
Piero stood before me suddenly;
And seem'd to hesitate... What did he say?...
O, well I recollect: he was disturb'd,
And manifested great anxiety
To hear my narrative: for me he waited:
His words were broken, doubtful, apprehensive...
Nor Salviati's danger, nor my own,
Could ever wake in him such agony:...
If he himself within that cave had laid
Some snare for my destruction?... Yet, the man
Whom I transfix'd appear'd to me unarm'd:
I first assaulted him; no word he spake...
What boots it? more obscure than endless night,
Who, except Cosmo or Piero, can
Unravel thee, thou horrid mystery?—
But, more and more I feel myself o'erwhelm'd
With unaccustom'd fear: within my heart
An unknown terror rises.—O suspense,
O thou, the chief and worst of ills, no more,
No more thy torments will I harbor thus.
Thither I go; thither I go myself,
To see what death...

Scene III.

ELEONORA, GARCIA.

Ele. O son! what hast thou done?...
O Heav'ns! Ah, fly!...
Gar. Fly? I? and wherefore? whither?
Ele. Fly, fly, O son!...
Gar. Ah, no! I will not fly.
My father, on my ruin bent, contrived
The crime, whate'er it be; I fly not, no.

Ele. Ah! if thou carest for thyself, for us,
For me, withdraw thyself without delay
From the first outburst of thy father's fury.
Gar. Fury? what have I done? and what can add
Force to his natural ferocity?
Ele. Hear'st thou?—On ev'ry side with piercing cries
The palace echoes. What canst thou have done?
Preceded by a hundred torches, Cosmo
Enraged within the cavern ran; in arms
Others went with him: all at once cried out
The name of Garcia. What canst thou have done?
Thou know'st him well; ah, fly!—O Heav'ns! he comes.
What stunning clamor! Didst thou hear the cry?
"Treason! and to the traitor!" . . . O my son! . . .
Gar. The treason is from Cosmo; Cosmo is
The traitor: but I'm doom'd to be the victim;
I have deserved it. Let him come, I fear not.
Ele. Unhappy I! with sword unsheath'd, behold him . . .
At least, within my arms . . .

Scene IV.

ELEONORA, GARCIA, COSMO, *with naked sword; Guards with torches and arms.*

Cos. On ev'ry side
Close up the avenues.—Where is the traitor?
Slunk to his mother's arms? In vain . . .
Gar. From thence
I've freed myself. What wouldest thou with me?
What have I done?
Ele. O pity! thou'rt a father . . .
Cos. I was so once.
Ele. O Heav'ns! . . .
Gar. What have I done?
Cos. Askest thou that, when thou hast slain Diego? . . .
Ele. My son? . . .
Gar. Diego? . . .
Cos. Lady, get thee hence . . .
Ele. Yet he's thy son . . .
Gar. Behold my breast . . .
Ele. Ah! pause . . .

Cos. Die.
Ele. What! My son? . . . O blow! . . .[1]
Cos. Thou impious one,
Is he thy son, who hath thy son destroy'd?
Gar. We all . . . are impious . . . Never did the sun . . .
Visit a more flagitious race than ours.—
Father, . . . I swear to thee, . . . I knew it not . . .
If . . . by this hand of mine . . . Diego fell,
Piero . . . plann'd . . . the execrable scheme . . .
Father, . . . I . . . die; and dying . . . I invoke . . .
The Heav'ns . . . to witness . . . that . . . I speak the truth.
Cos. Beloved Diego, do I lose thee! . . . Heav'ns!
And in the life-blood of another son
I've bathed this dagger? . . . In the arms of death
My consort lies: on my remaining son
Frightful suspicions fall . . . O state! . . . To whom
Can I now turn? . . . Alas! . . . In whom confide?

[1] She falls in a swoon.

XIV.

SAUL.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE characters in this fine tragedy are Saul; Jonathan, his son; David; Michal, Saul's daughter and David's wife; Abner; and Ahimelech, the priest—all taken from the Bible narrative in the First Book of Samuel. The play opens with the appearance of David at Gilboa, at the time when he was a fugitive from Saul. He announces his intention of surrendering to the king. Jonathan enters, and is delighted to see his friend again. He tells David how Saul is under the influence of an evil spirit, how Abner has gained the mastery over him, and how Michal laments her husband's absence. Just as David asks when he can see her again, she enters and announces to Jonathan that she intends to go in search of her husband. David, who had drawn aside, joins her, and a happy meeting takes place. They all agree that he should seek a propitious moment for appearing before Saul and obtaining a reconciliation.

The next Act discloses Saul conversing with Abner. He bewails his past greatness and present misfortunes, all of which Abner attributes to David. Saul tells him of a dream he has just had, in which the shade of Samuel had taken the crown off his head and tried to place it on David's, but the latter refused to take it, and induced Samuel to restore it to Saul. Jonathan and Michal enter, and by persuasive language prepare Saul for the return of David, who next appears, and submissively asks Saul to employ him again against the Philistines. When Saul is

softening towards him, Abner accuses him of rebelling with the prophets against Saul. David proves his innocence by showing the piece of Saul's robe which he had cut off in the Cave of En-gedi, when he might easily have slain Saul. Saul is satisfied, admits his error, rejoices over David's return, entrusts him with the command of his armies, and desires Jonathan to fight by his side.

When the third Act begins, Abner expounds to David his proposed plan of battle, which the latter praises highly, and desires Abner to lead the main body of the army, whilst he and Jonathan fight near Saul's tent. When David is alone, Michal comes and tells him that Abner has once more roused Saul's fury against him, and discloses all her apprehensions for his safety. Saul and Jonathan join them, and all Saul's language shows that the attacks of madness, which have so often come over him of late, are again returning. He ends by bursting into tears, and Jonathan asks David to complete his cure by singing some of the divine strains in which he excelled, and which in happier days he had so often sung to Saul. David accordingly does so in a succession of lyrical poems of varying metres, adapted to the different themes he commemorates. The concluding warlike verses, however, once more rekindle Saul's madness, and he attempts to seize his sword with the object of striking down David; but his children restrain him and David escapes.

The fourth Act shows Jonathan and Michal lamenting over Saul's condition. He enters, and desires Michal to bring David to him. When alone with Jonathan, he tells him of all his conflicting feelings of love and hatred towards David, which Jonathan attributes to the power of Heaven. Abner enters, bringing Ahimelech with him, and tells the king that when the hour of battle arrived David was missing, and that the priest had been detected in the camp. When the latter avows that he is Ahimelech, Saul upbraids him for having sacrilegiously given Goliath's sword to David out of the tabernacle, and denounces the priestly race. Ahimelech defends David, foretells Saul's approaching fate, and points out Abner to him as his evil genius. Saul orders him to instant death, despite the entreaties of Jonathan, and tells Abner to alter

all the battle arrangements made by David, saying that he means to fight in the morning and not in the afternoon as David and Abner had arranged, with the view of having the sun in the enemy's faces and on their own backs.

In the fifth Act David and Michal are seen taking a tender farewell of each other, as David insists on her not undergoing the hardships he must encounter in his intended flight, on which he had resolved on hearing of Saul's cruelty. Michal is left alone, and hears the unexpected sounds of battle in the distance, and Saul lamenting madly in his tent close by. He enters in delirious excitement, and reproaches himself with the murder of Ahimelech, while avenging spectres surround him on all sides. Abner, accompanied by a few flying soldiers, rushes in, tells him that the Philistines have attacked them unawares, and, having defeated the king's forces, are advancing against Saul himself, whom he entreats to fly. He refuses to do so, but directs Abner to remove Michal to a place of safety. The victorious Philistines enter as Saul stabs himself with his own sword, and the curtain falls.

All critics agree in considering this as the finest of Alfieri's tragedies, his severe style being especially suited to the simplicity of the patriarchal age. Even Schlegel says that "this piece is favorably distinguished from the rest by a certain Oriental splendor, and the lyrical sublimity in which the troubled mind of Saul gives utterance to itself." Sismondi gives a detailed analysis of and copious extracts from this play, which he thinks is conceived in the spirit of Shakspeare. He points out how little action there is in it, as "Saul perishes the victim, not of his passions, not of his crimes, but of his remorse, augmented by the terror which a gloomy imagination has cast over his soul." Another critic says that "*Saul* is the finest of Alfieri's plays. The author has imparted an Oriental and biblical coloring to the language and the situations of his personages, which, together with the fine lyric passages expressive of the changes in Saul's mental alienation, give a peculiar, an epic interest to this

play." ('Penny Cyclop.,' art. *Alfieri.*) Madame de Staël says that Alfieri "has made in his *Saul* a superb use of lyric poetry."

Alfieri himself considered the fourth Act as the weakest part of the play, but expected a great theatrical success from the rapid and eminently fatal effect of the catastrophe. He was in hopes that some eminent actor might be found who could render with due emphasis the difficult lyrical passages in the third Act, which he thought should be accompanied by a harp behind the scenes. He explains the apparently unnecessary introduction of Ahimelech by saying that he thought it desirable that a priest should appear to develop the threatening and angry part of the Deity, whilst David only develops His compassionate side.

This was the last of the original set of fourteen tragedies written by Alfieri in the seven years ending with 1782. He then wrote opposite it: "Here I lay down the buskin for ever." But seven years later he added: "Fool that I was, I thought so then; but I had scarcely begun."

DEDICATION

TO THE NOBLE LORD ABBOT,

TOMMASO VALPERGA OF CALUSO.

SINCE death has deprived me of the incomparable Francesco Gori, whom you well knew, no other friend of my heart remains to me, except yourself.

Hence I should not have seemed to myself, as far as I was able, to have perfectly completed this tragedy, with which, perhaps wrongly, I am singularly pleased, if it did not bear on its title-page your most beloved name. I dedicate it therefore to you; and so much the more willingly and heartily, as you, learned in many other sciences, are known by all to be most thoroughly skilled in the sacred writings, which, from your profound knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, you imbibe at the fountain-head.

On this account *Saul*, more than any other of my tragedies, belongs to you. I do not doubt that, in consideration of our friendship, you will accept it with a good grace: I ardently desire that you may esteem it worthy of you.

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

TRENT, *October* 27, 1784.

SAUL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAUL.	ABNER.
JONATHAN.	AHIMELECH.
MICHAL.	*Soldiers of the Israelites.*
DAVID.	*Soldiers of the Philistines.*

SCENE.—*The Camp of the Israelites in Gilboa.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

DAVID.

Da. Here, God Omnipotent, wilt Thou that I
Restrain that course to which Thou hast impell'd me?
Here will I stand.—These are Gilboa's mountains,
Now forming Israel's camp, exposed in front
To the profane Philistines. Ah, that I
Might fall to-day beneath the foeman's sword!
But, death awaits me from the hand of Saul.
Ah, cruel and infatuated Saul!
Who, without giving him a moment's respite,
Through caverns, and o'er cliffs, dost chase thy champion.
And yet the self-same David formerly
Was thy defender; all thy confidence
In me hadst thou reposed; me didst thou raise
To honor's pinnacle; and as a spouse
I was by thee selected for thy daughter . . .
But, as an inauspicious dowry, thou
Didst ask of me, dissever'd from thy foes,

A hundred heads: and I have brought of them
To thee, full faithfully, a double harvest . . .
But Saul, I clearly see, in thought is stricken;
Long hath he been so: to an evil spirit
His God abandons his perverted mind:
O Heav'ns! Distracted mortals! what are we,
If God forsakes us?—Night, do thou soon yield
Thy shades to the glad sun; for he to-day
The witness of a gen'rous enterprise
Is destined to shine forth. Gilboa, thou
Shalt, to the latest ages, be renown'd;
They shall record of thee, that David here
Himself surrender'd to ferocious Saul.—
March forth, O Israel, from thy peaceful tents;
March forth from them, O king: I challenge you
To-day to witness, if I yet am versed
In military arts. And march thou forth,
Impious Philistia; march thou forth, and see
Whether my sword have yet the pow'r to smite.

SCENE II.

JONATHAN, DAVID.

Jon. What voice hath caught my ears? I hear a voice
Skilful to penetrate my heart.
Da. Who comes? . . .
O that the dawn would rise! Fain would not I
Like a base fugitive present myself . . .
Jon. What! ho! Who art thou? Near the royal tent,
What art thou doing? Speak.
Da. 'Tis Jonathan . . .
Courage.—A son of war, and Israel's stay,
Am I. And the Philistines know me well.
Jon. What do I hear? Ah! David could alone
Thus answer.
Da. Jonathan . . .
Jon. Heav'ns! David, . . . brother . . .
Da. O joy! . . . To thee . . .
Jon. And can it, then, be true? . . .
Thou in Gilboa? Fear'st thou not my father?
I tremble for thee; ah! . . .

Da. Why speak'st thou thus?
Death present, in the fight, a thousand times
Have I beheld and braved: for a long time
I have since fled thy father's rage unjust:
But to the valiant, fear alone is death.
No longer now I fear: with mighty danger
The monarch, and his people, are encompass'd:
Shall David be the only one meanwhile
To skulk securely in untrodden forests?
While imminent o'er you the weapons hang
Of the unfaithful, shall I take a thought
Of my own safety? I come here to die;
But, like a hero, in my country's cause,
Amid the clash of arms, and in the camp,
And also for ungrateful Saul himself,
Who now pursues me with the cry of death.

Jon. O virtue of a David! God's elect
Thou art assuredly. That mighty God,
Who with such superhuman thoughts inspires
Thy lofty heart, gave thee a heav'nly angel
To be thy guard.—Yet, to the monarch's presence
How shall I bring thee? He believes, or feigns,
That thou'rt enroll'd among the hostile squadrons;
And taxes thee as a rebellious traitor.

Da. Alas! too forcibly he tempted me
To seek a refuge 'mid his enemies.
But if those foes impugn him with their arms,
I war with them, for him, till they're subdued.
Then let him afterwards repeat to me
My ancient recompense; fresh hate, and death.

Jon. Unhappy father! There are who deceive him.
Perfidious Abner, a dissembling friend,
Is ever at his side. The ghastly demon,
That hath possess'd, and subjugates his heart,
At least bestows on him a transient respite;
But Abner's unrelenting artifice
Never forsakes him. He alone is heard,
He only; he alone is loved: to Saul,
Like a malignant parasite, he paints
All that surpasses his frail excellence,

As dang'rous and uncertain. With my father,
In vain thy wife and I . . .
Da. My wife! Loved name!
Where is my faithful Michal, where? Does she,
Spite of her cruel father, love me still? . . .
Jon. Love thee, say'st thou? . . . She, too, is in the camp . . .
Da. O Heav'ns! Shall I behold her, then? O joy!
How came she in the camp? . . .
Jon. Her father felt
Pity for her; alone he would not leave her,
A victim to her sorrow, in the palace:
And even she, though always sad, affords
To him some comfort. Ah! since thy departure,
Our house, indeed, has been the house of tears.
Da. Belovèd spouse! From me thy tender looks
Will banish ev'ry thought of past distress;
Will banish ev'ry thought of coming woe.
Jon. Ah, hadst thou seen her! . . . Scarcely had she lost thee,
When ev'ry ornament her grief disdain'd:
She strew'd with ashes her dishevell'd hair;
Pallor and tears sat on her sunken cheeks;
Profound mute grief was in her trembling heart.
A thousand times each day she prostrate fell
Before her father; and with sobs exclaim'd:
"Restore my David; thou didst give him to me."
Her garments then she rent; and, weeping, bathed
Her father's hand, that even he shed tears.
Who did not shed them?—Only Abner; he
Insisted that, half dead e'en as she was,
She should be taken from her father's feet.
Da. O sight! O what dost thou recount to me?
Jon. Would it were not the truth! . . . At thy departure,
Peace, glory, enterprise in arms, departed:
The hearts of Israel are benumb'd with dread;
Philistia's sons, who heretofore appear'd
Mere striplings when we fought beneath thy banners,
Now, since no more we have thee for our leader,
With port colossal stalk before our eyes:
Pent in this valley, mindless of ourselves,

Threats, insults, and derision, we endure.
Why should we wonder? Israel hath at once
In David lost her judgment and her sword.
I, who, pursuing thy heroic steps,
Elate with conscious glory trod the camp,
Now feel my right hand impotent to smite.
Now, that so often I behold thee, David,
Exposed to hardships, sever'd from my side,
Pursued by danger; now, no more I seem
To combat for my monarch, and my father,
My wife, my children: far more dear to me
Art thou than country, father, wife, and children . . .
Da. Thou lovest me, and more than I deserve:
May God reward thy love . . .
Jon. The God of justice,
The swift rewarder of true excellence,
He is with thee. By dying Samuel thou
In Rama wert received; the sacred lips
Of the anointed prophet, by whose means
My sire was crown'd, great marvels prophesied
Of thee in after-times: hence, in my sight
Thy life is no less sacred than beloved.
The cruel perils of the court alone
For thee alarm me; not those of the camp:
But death, and treachery, death's harbinger,
Round these pavilions hover evermore:
Death, Abner gives it; often Saul commands it.
Ah, David! hide thyself; until, at least,
The mountain echoes with the warlike trumpet.
To-day I deem that we shall be compell'd
To meet our foes.
Da. And shall a deed of valor
Be, like a scheme of guilt, by stealth transacted?
Saul shall behold me, ere I meet my foes.
I bring with me what must confound; what must
Reform the hardest of all harden'd hearts,
I bring; and first the fury of the king,
Then that of hostile swords, will I confront.—
What canst thou say, O king, if I to thee
Bend, as thy servant, my submissive brow?
I, who, the husband of thy daughter, ask

Pardon of thee for ne'er committed faults:
Thy ancient champion I, who in the jaws
Of mortal danger, as thy comrade, shield,
Or victim, offer now myself to thee.—
The sacred old man dying greeted me
In Rama; and address'd me like a father:
And in my arms expired. As his own son
He formerly loved Saul: but what reward
Had he for this?—The holy, dying man
Enjoin'd my love and homage to the king,
Not less than blind obedience to my God.
His latest words shall be, e'en till I die,
Indelibly engraven on my heart:
"Ah, wretched Saul! if thou art not more wise,
"The wrath of the Most High will fall upon thee."
This Samuel said to me.—My Jonathan,
Fain would I see thee from the just revenge
Of Heav'n exempt: and thou, I trust, wilt be so;
And so we all shall be; and Saul, who yet
May pardon seek, and reconciliation.—
Ah, woe, if the Eternal sends His bolt
Of vengeance from the gaping firmament!
Thou know'st, that often in the fierce career
Of His retributory punishments,
He hath involved the guiltless with the guilty.
His irresistible, impetuous flash
Extirpates, crumbles, and beats down to earth,
And utterly destroys the flow'rs, fruits, leaves,
Equally with the foul and tainted plant.

Jon. —David can do, with God, full much for Saul.
Oft in the visions of the night I've seen thee,
And so sublime in look, that at thy feet
Prostrate I've fallen.—More I shall not say;
Nor more shouldst thou to me. Long as I live,
I swear no sword of Saul shall e'er descend
To injure thee, no, never. But, O Heav'ns!...
How can I screen thee from vile stratagems?...
Here, 'mid the pleasures of the costly banquet,
Here, 'mid the harmony of festal song,
Is poison oft imbibed in faithless gold.
Ah! who from this can guard thee?

Da. Israel's God,
If I deserve deliv'rance; not a host,
If I deserve destruction.—But inform me:
Before my father, can I see my wife?
Till the dawn breaks, I would not enter there...
Jon. On downy couch doth she await the day?
Before the dawn she ever comes to me
To weep thy absence; and together here
We put up prayers to God for our sick father.—
Behold; a form in white not far from us
Gleams indistinctly: it is she, perchance:
A little step aside; and listen to her:
But, if it be another, do not now,
I pray thee, show thyself.
Da. I will obey thee.

Scene III.

MICHAL, JONATHAN.

Mi. Abhorr'd, eternal night, wilt thou ne'er vanish?...
But, doth the sun, indeed, for me arise
The harbinger of joy? Unhappy I!
Who in an everlasting darkness live!—
Hast thou, my brother, left thy bed before me?
Yet, certainly, my frame, that never rests,
Was most exhausted. But, how can I rest
On easy pillows, while on the hard earth,
Banish'd, a fugitive, within the dens
Of cruel beasts, and watch'd by ambush'd foes,
My loved one lies? Ah, father, fiercer far
Than rav'ning monsters of the wilderness!
Hard-hearted Saul! Thou takest from thy child
Her husband, and thou takest not her life?—
Hear me, my brother; here no more I'll tarry:
'Twill be a noble deed, if thou go with me:
But, if thou go not, I alone will venture
His footsteps to trace out: I am resolved
To find my David, or to suffer death.
Jon. Delay a little while; and dry thy tears:
P'rhaps to Gilboa will our David come...

Mi. What say'st thou? Can he e'er approach the place
Which Saul inhabits? . . .
Jon. David will be drawn,
Drawn irresistibly by his fond heart,
And his unswerving constancy, to seek
The place where Jonathan and Michal dwell.
Dost thou not think that his prevailing love
Can bid defiance to the pow'r of fear?
And wouldst thou wonder, if he dared come hither?
Mi. O, I should tremble for his life . . . But yet,
The seeing him would make me . . .
Jon. And if he
Fear'd nothing? . . . And should he with arguments
Defend his unexpected daring?—Saul,
Less terrible in his adversity
Than in prosperity, bewilder'd stands,
His strength mistrusting; this thou knowest well:
Since the invincible right hand of David
For him disperses not the hostile ranks,
Saul fears; but, arrogant, he speaks it not.
Each of us in his face can well discern
That hopes of triumph are not in his heart.
Perchance this moment he would see thy spouse.
Mi. Yes, it is maybe true: but he is far; . . .
Ah! where? . . . and in what state? . . . Alas! . . .
Jon. He's near thee,
More than thou thinkest.
Mi. Heav'ns! . . . why mock me thus? . . .

Scene IV.

DAVID, MICHAL, JONATHAN.

Da. Thy spouse is at thy side.
Mi. O voice! . . . O sight!
O joy! . . . I cannot . . . speak.—Supreme amazement! . . .
And is it true . . . that I at last embrace thee? . . .
Da. Belovèd wife! . . . Hard has my absence been! . . .
Death, if I'm doom'd to meet with thee to-day,
By all who love me, and by all I love,
I am at least surrounded. Better die
At once, than languish on in solitude

A weary life, where thou by none art loved,
And where thou lovest none. Thou thirsty sword
Of Saul, I here expect thee; take my life:
Here will my eyes at least be closed in death
By my belovèd wife; my limbs composed;
And bathed by her with tears of genuine grief.
Mi. My David!... Thou at once the source and end
Of all my hopes; ah, may thy coming here
To me be joyful! God, who rescued thee
From such prodigious oft-repeated dangers,
Restores thee not to us in vain to-day...
O, with what strength thy sight alone inspires me!
So much I trembled for thee when remote;
Almost I cease to tremble for thee now...
But, what do I behold? In what uncouth
And savage garment wrapt, the dawn of day
Displays thee to my eyes? My long'd-for champion;
How art thou stripp'd of ev'ry ornament?
No more thou wear'st that robe of gilded purple,
Which these hands wrought for thee! In all this squalor,
Who would deem thee the monarch's son-in-law?
Thou seem'st a vulgar warrior, and no more,
By thy accoutrements.
Da. We're in the camp:
Not in the centre of a timid court:
The common garment, and the sharpen'd sword,
Are most befitting here. I am resolved
To-day once more in the Philistines' blood
My garments to impurple. Thou, meanwhile,
Rely with me on Israel's mighty God,
Who from destruction can deliver me,
If I deserve not death.
Jon. Behold, the day
Is fully now reveal'd: to linger here
Thou canst not with impunity persist.
Although, perchance, thou comest opportunely,
Still it behoves thee to advance with caution.—
Each morn we are accustom'd at this hour
To meet our father: we will scrutinize
How he to-day is govern'd and possess'd
By his distemper'd humor: by degrees

We will prepare him, if occasion smiles,
For thy reception; and will take good care
That no one first to him malignantly
Reports thy reappearance. Thou, meanwhile,
Keep thyself separate; lest any one
Should recognize thee here, and then betray thee;
And Abner even cause thee to be slain.
Lower the visor of thy helmet: mix
Among the undistinguish'd warriors here,
And, unobserved, await till I return
To thee, or send for thee ...

Mi. Among the warriors,
How can my David be conceal'd? What eye
Equal to his from 'neath the helmet darts?
Who wields a sword that may with his compare?
And whose arms clang with such a martial sound?
Ah, no! my love, 'twere better thou wert hid,
Till I return to thee. Unhappy I!
Scarce found, must I surrender thee already?
But only for an instant; after that,
Never, no never, will I leave thee more.
Yet first would I see thee conceal'd in safety.
Behold! dost thou not see a spacious cave
In the recesses of this gloomy wood?
There oft have I invoked thee, from the world
Retired, and sigh'd for thee, and thought on thee;
There with my bitter tears have I bedew'd
The rugged stones: in this conceal thyself,
Till the time come when thou shouldst show thyself.

Da. In all things, Michal, I would yield to thee.
Go in implicit trust: I am impell'd
By a sure instinct; I at random act not;
I love you both; for your sakes do I live:
And in Jehovah only I confide.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SAUL, ABNER.

Sa. This dawn how beautiful! To-day the sun
Arises not in bloody mantle wrapt;
He seems to promise a propitious day.—
O my past years! where are ye now all fled?
Saul never from his martial bed, till now,
Rose in the camp, without the certain trust
That, ere at eve his pillow he resumed,
He should be victor.

Ab. Wherefore now, O king,
Dost thou despair? Hast thou not heretofore
Discomfited Philistia's pride? The later
That thou beginn'st this fight—this Abner tells thee—
The nobler, fuller, triumph thou shalt win.

Sa. O Abner, with what diff'rent eyes do youth
And hoary age contemplate the events
Of human life! When with a well-knit arm
I grasp'd this ponderous and gnarlèd spear,
Which now I scarce can wield; I ill conceived
The possibility of self-mistrust . . .
But, I have now not only lost my youth . . .
Ah! were but the invincible right hand
Of God still with me! . . . or with me at least
David, my champion lost! . . .

Ab. What then are we?
Perchance without him we no longer conquer?
If I thought that, I never would unsheathe
My sword again, except to pierce my heart.
David, who is the first, the only cause
Of all thy misadventures . . .

Sa. Ah! not so:
All my calamities may be referr'd
To a more dreadful cause . . . And what? Wouldst thou
Conceal from me the horror of my state?
Ah! were I not a father, as I am,
Alas! too certainly, of much-loved children, . . .

Should I desire life, victory, or throne?
I should already, and a long time since,
Headlong have cast myself 'mid hostile swords:
I should already thus at least at once
Have closed the fearful life that I drag on.
How many years have pass'd now, since a smile
Was seen to play upon my lips? My children,
Whom I so dearly love, if they caress me,
Most frequently inflame my heart to rage . . .
Ever impatient, fierce, disturb'd, and wrathful;
I am a burden to myself and others;
In peace I wish for war, in war for peace:
Poison conceal'd I drink in ev'ry cup;
In ev'ry friend I see an enemy;
The softest carpets of Assyria seem
Planted with thorns to my unquiet limbs;
Anguish is my short sleep; my dreams are terror.
What more? who would believe it? war's loud trumpet
Speaks to my ears in an appalling voice;
The trumpet fills the heart of Saul with fear.
Thou seeest clearly that Saul's tott'ring house
Is desolate, bereft of all its splendor;
Thou see'st that God hath cast me off for ever.
And thou, thyself, (too well thou know'st the truth,)
Dost sometimes, as thou art, appear to me
My kinsman, champion, and my real friend,
The leader of my armies, the support
Of my renown; and sometimes dost appear
The interested minion of a court,
Hostile, invidious, crafty, and a traitor . . .

Ab. Now, Saul, that thou hast thus regain'd thy reason,
Do thou, I pray thee, to thy mind recall
Each past transaction! Art thou not aware
That all the wounds of thy afflicted heart
From Rama spring; yea, from the dwelling spring
Of Rama's many prophets? Who to thee
First dared to say, that God had cast thee off?
The daring, turbulent, ambitious Samuel,
The crafty, doting priest; whose palsying words
His sycophantic worshippers repeat.
The royal wreath, which he thought his, he saw

Glitt'ring upon thy brow with jealous eyes.
Already he accounted it entwined
Around his hoary locks; when lo! the voice,
At once unanimous, and loud spoken,
Of Israel's people, to the wind dispersed
His wishes, and a warrior king preferr'd.
This is thy crime, this only. Hence, when thou
Ceasedst to be subordinate to him,
He ceased to call thee the elect of God.
This, this alone at first disturb'd thy reason:
And then the eloquence inspired of David
The injury completed. He in arms
Was valiant, I deny it not; but still
He was implicitly the tool of Samuel;
And fitter for the altar than the camp:
In arm, a warrior; but in heart, a priest.
Of ev'ry adventitious ornament
Be truth divested; thou dost know the truth.
I from thy blood am sprung; what constitutes
Thy glory, constitutes my glory too:
But David, no, can never raise himself,
If first he tread not Saul beneath his feet.

Sa. David? . . . I hate him . . . But yet I to him
Have yielded as a consort my own daughter . . .
Ah! thou canst never know.—That self-same voice,
Imperative and visionary voice,
Which as a youth my nightly slumbers broke,
When I in privacy obscurely lived
Far from the throne, and all aspiring thoughts;
For many nights that self-same voice hath been
Tremendous, and repell'd me, thund'ring forth,
Like the deep roaring of the stormy waves:
"Depart, depart, O Saul . . ." The sacred aspect,
The venerable aspect of the prophet,
Which I had seen in dreams, before he had
Made manifest that God had chosen me
For Israel's king: that Samuel, in a dream,
Now with far diff'rent aspect I behold.
I, from a hollow, deep, and dreadful valley,
Behold him *sitting* on a radiant mount:
David is humbly prostrate at his feet:

The sacred prophet on his forehead pours
The holy oil; and with the other hand,
Extending to my head a hundred cubits,
He snatches from my brow the royal crown;
And seeks to place it on the brow of David:
But, wouldst thou think it? David prostrate falls,
With piteous gesture, at the prophet's feet,
Refusing to receive it; and he weeps,
And cries, and intercedes so fervently,
That he refits it on my head at last . . .
—O spectacle! O David, gen'rous David!
Then thou art yet obedient to thy king?
My son? my faithful subject? and my friend? . . .
Distraction! Wouldst thou take from me my crown?
Thou, who daredst do it, insolent old man,
Tremble . . . Who art thou? . . . Let him die at once,
Who e'en conceived the thought . . .—Alas, alas!
I rave like one distracted! . . .

Ab. Let him die;
Let David only die: and with him vanish
Dreams, terrors, omens, and distresses.

SCENE II.

JONATHAN, MICHAL, SAUL, ABNER.

Jon. Peace
Be with the king.

Mi. And God be with my father.

Sa. . . . Grief always is with me.—I rose to-day,
Before my custom'd hour, in joyful hope . . .
But, like a vapor of the desert, hope
Hath disappear'd already.—O my son,
What boots it now the battle to defer?
To dread defeat is worse than to endure it;
And let us once endure it. Let us fight
To-day; I will it.

Jon. We to-day shall conquer.
Father, resume thy hopes: hope never shone
With more authentic brightness on thy prospects.
Ah, calm thy looks again! my heart is big
With presages of victory. This plain

Shall with the bodies of our foes be cover'd;
And to the rav'nous vultures will we leave
A horrid banquet . . .
Mi. To a calmer spot
Within thy palace we will soon repair,
O father. There, amid thy palms enthroned,
Joyful thyself, thou, by restoring to her
Her much-loved husband, wilt restore to life
Thy mournful daughter . . .
Sa. . . . Evermore in tears?
Are these, indeed, the pleasing objects destined
To renovate Saul's languid, wither'd mind?
Art thou a solace thus to my distress?
Daughter of tears, depart; go; leave me; hence!
Mi. Alas! . . . Thou wouldst not, father, that I wept? . . .
Father, and who in everlasting tears
Now keeps me, if not thou? . . .
Jon. Refrain; wouldst thou
Be irksome to thy father?—Saul, take comfort:
A minister of war and victory
Stands in the camp: a spirit of salvation,
With dawning light descended from the skies,
Which o'er all Israel's host will spread to-day
His brooding wings. A certainty of conquest,
E'en on thy heart, will quickly be impress'd.
Sa. Now, p'rhaps, thou wouldst that I should take a part
In thy weak transports? I?—What victory?
What spirit comes? . . . Let us all weep. To-day
That venerable oak, torn up, will show
Its squalid roots, where heretofore it spread
Its stately branches to the gales of Heaven.
All, all is weeping, tempest, blood, and death:
Rend, rend your garments; scatter on your hair
Polluting dust. Yes, this day is the last;
To us, the final day.
Ab. Oft have I said it:
Your importuning presence evermore
Redoubles his fierce pangs.
Mi. And what? Must we
Leave our belovèd father? . . .

Jon. At his side
Presumest thou alone to stand? Dost thou
Presume that in thy hands?...
Sa. What, what is this?
Rage sits upon the faces of my children?
Who, who has wrong'd them? Abner, thou perchance?
These are my blood; dost know it not?... Remember...
Jon. Ah, yes! we are thy blood; and for thy sake
Hold ourselves ready all our blood to shed...
Mi. Father, when I of thee my consort seek,
Am I by selfish love alone impell'd?
I ask of thee the champion of thy people,
The terror of Philistia, thy defender.
In thy disconsolate fantastic hours,
And in thy fatal presages of death,
Ah! did not David sometimes solace thee
With his celestial music? Was not he
A very beam of joy across thy darkness?
Jon. And I; thou knowest, if I wear a sword;
But, what boots that, if the resounding steps
Of Israel's warrior to my steps give not
The law supreme? Should we of fighting speak,
Were David here? We had already conquer'd.
Sa. O times long past!... O my illustrious days
Of joyful triumph!... Lo! they throng before me,
Triumphant images of past success.
I from the camp return, with bloody sweat
All cover'd, and with honorable dust:
In my extinguish'd pride, behold, I walk;
And praises to the Lord... I, praise the Lord?... —
The ears of God are closed against my voice;
Mute is my lip... Where is my glory? where,
Where is the blood of my slain enemies?...
Jon. Thou wouldst have all in David...
Mi. But, with thee
David is not, O no: to banishment
Thou drov'st him from thy presence, sought'st his death...
David, thy son; thy noblest ornament;
Modest and docile; more than lightning swift
To serve thee; and in loving thee more warm,
Than thy own children. Father, ah! desist...

Sa. Tears from my eyes are gushing? Who hath thus
Forced me to unaccustom'd tenderness?
Let me dry up my eyes.
Ab. I counsel thee,
O king, to thy pavilion to withdraw.
Thy marshall'd forces, ready for the combat,
Ere long I will display to thee. Now come;
And be convinced that nothing is in David...

SCENE III.

DAVID, SAUL, ABNER, JONATHAN, MICHAL.

Da. Except his innocence.
Sa. What do I see?
Mi. O Heav'ns!
Jon. What hast thou done?
Ab. Audacious...
Jon. Father...
Mi. Father, he is my spouse; to me thou gav'st him.
Sa. O what a sight is this!
Da. O Saul, my king!
Thou dost demand this head; for a long time
Already hast thou sought it; here it is;
Sever it now, 'tis thine.
Sa. What do I hear?...
O David,... David! In thee speaks a God:
A God to-day doth usher thee to me...
Da. Yes, monarch; He who is the only God;
He, who in Elah prompted me to meet,
Although a stripling, and yet inexpert,
The menacing colossal arrogance
Of fierce Goliath, clad in mail complete:
That God, who thence on thy wide-dreaded arms
Heap'd victory on victory; and who,
Always in His designs inscrutable,
Chose, as an instrument, my hand obscure
For signal exploits: hither now that God
Doth usher me to thee, with victory.
Now, as thou likest best, a simple warrior,
Or leader of thy bands, if I deserve
Such a distinction, take me. On the earth

First let thy foes be strewn: by the keen breath
Of northern blasts be all the clouds dispersed,
That gather in dark masses round thy throne:
Thou afterwards, O Saul, with death shalt pay me.
Not one faint struggle, not a single thought,
Should my death cost thee. Thou, O king, shalt say:
"Be David slain:" and Abner instantly
Shall slay me.—I will grasp nor sword nor shield;
Within the palace of my sov'reign lord
All weapons misbecome me, saving patience,
Humility, and prayers, and passive love,
And innocence. I ought, if God so will,
To perish as thy son, not as thy foe.
Thus was the son of the first ancestor
Of Israel's people ready to resign,
On the great mount, his sacrificial blood;
No disobedient word or sign escaped him:
Already had his father raised one hand
To slay him, while he fondly kiss'd the other.—
Saul gave my life; Saul takes that life away:
Through him I gain'd renown, through him I lose it:
He made me great, and now he makes me nothing.

Sa. O, what a thick mist from my agèd eyes
Those words disperse! What voice sounds in my heart!...—
David, thou speakest as a man of valor,
And valiant were thy deeds; but, blind with pride,
Thou dar'dst despise me afterwards; dar'dst raise
Thyself above me; to my praise pretend,
And clothe thyself with my reflected light.
And, were I not thy king, does it become
A warrior young to scorn an agèd warrior?
Thou, great in all things, wert not so in this.
Of thee the daughters of my people sang:
"David, the valiant, his ten thousands slew;
"Saul slew his thousands." To my inmost heart,
David, thou woundedst me. Why saidst thou not:
"Saul, in his youth, not only slew a thousand,
"But many thousands: he the warrior is;
"Me he created"?

Da. I indeed said this;

But those, who to thy hearing gain'd access,
More loudly cried: "Too powerful is David:
"In all men's mouths, and in the hearts of many;
"If thou, Saul, slay him not, who will restrain him?"—
With less of art, and more of verity,
What said not Abner to the king?: "Ah, David
"Too much surpasses me; hence I abhor him;
"Hence envy, fear him; hence I wish him dead."

Ab. Miscreant! the day that thou clandestinely
Didst with thy prophets trait'rously cabal;
When for thy monarch thou didst spread in secret
Infamous snares; when shelter thou didst seek
E'en in the bosom of Philistia's sons;
And spending days profane with foes impure,
Didst meanwhile with domestic traitors hold
A secret commerce: now, do I perchance
Only allege this? or didst thou not do it?
At first, who more install'd thee than myself
Within thy monarch's heart? Who prompted him
His son-in-law to make thee? Abner only...

Mi. 'Twas I: I at my father's hand obtain'd
David as consort; his I sought to be;
I, smitten by his virtues. He inspired
My earliest sighs; the idol of my heart,
My hope, my life was he, and he alone.
Although disguised in base obscurity,
Reduced to poverty, yet evermore
David had been more welcome to my heart,
Than any proud king whom the east adores.

Sa. But thou, O David, canst thou controvert
The charges Abner brings? Didst thou not seek
A shelter in Philistia? Didst thou not
Sow in my people seeds of black revolt?
Hast thou not plotted many times to take
Thy monarch's life, thy second father's life?

Da. Behold; this border of thy royal garment
Answers for me. Dost recognize it, thou?
Take it; examine it.

Sa. Give it to me.
What do I see? 'Tis mine; assuredly...
Whence didst thou take it?...

Da. From thyself I took it,
With this my sword, from off thy royal robe,
My own hands sever'd it.—Remember'st thou
En-gedi? There, where barbarously thou
Pursuedst me, a banish'd man, to death;
There was I, in the cave, that from the fount
Derives its name, a friendless fugitive;
There, thou alone, thy warriors having station'd
To guard the rugged entrance of the cave,
On downy pillows, in calm quietness,
Didst close thine eyes in sleep . . . Didst thou, O Heav'ns,
With rancorous and bloody thoughts inflamed,
Yet slumber there? Thou see'st how mighty God
Defeats the schemes of human subtlety!
There with impunity I might have slain thee,
And by another issue have escaped:
This border of thy robe sufficiently
Proves this to thee. Behold thee, thou a king,
A haughty and a great one, in the midst
Of arm'd battalions, fallen in the hands
Of the proscribed calumniated youth . . .
Abner, the valiant Abner, where was he?
Thus does he guard thy life? Thus serve his king?
Thou see'st in whom thou hast reposed thy trust;
And against whom thou hast thine anger turn'd.—
Now, art thou satisfied? Now hast thou not,
Saul, of my heart proofs incontestable,
And of my fealty and innocence?
Not proofs persuasive of the little love,
Of the malignant and invidious rage,
And the precarious vigilance of Abner? . . .

Sa. My son, thou hast prevail'd; . . . thou hast prevail'd.
Abner, do thou behold him; and be dumb.

Mi. O joy!

Da. O father! . . .

Jon. O auspicious day!

Mi. O husband! . . .

Sa. Yes, this is a day of joy,
A day of restitution and of triumph.
I will that thou to-day command my armies:
Abner, oppose not; for I will it so.

Let no contention 'twixt you two arise,
Except an emulation which shall slay
Most of our enemies. Thou, Jonathan,
Beside the brother of thy heart shalt fight:
David to me is surety for thy life;
And thou art so for his.
Jon. When David leads
Our armies, God Himself becomes our surety.
Mi. God doth restore thee to me; He will save thee . . .
Sa. Let this suffice. Before the fight begins,
Come to the tent, O son, a little while,
And rest thy wearied limbs. Thy spouse beloved
Shall soothe the long affliction of thy absence:
With her own hands meanwhile shall she provide
And minister thy food. My daughter, now
Repair in part (for thou alone canst do it)
The unintended errors of thy father.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

DAVID, ABNER.

Ab. Behold me: at thy summons I appear,
Ere scarce the king hath from the banquet risen.
Da. I wish'd to speak to thee in secret here.
Ab. Thou wouldst perchance hear of the coming fight? . . .
Da. And at the same time tell thee, that thou'rt not
Subordinate to me; that both alike
Our people and our lawful king we serve,
And Israel's mighty God. Let not our breasts
Harbor another thought.
Ab. I, for our king,
From whose blood I descend, had in the camp
Already brandish'd my ensanguined sword,
Before the shrill twang of thy sling was heard . . .
Da. The monarch's blood runs not within my veins:
My deeds are known to all: I boast not of them:

Abner well knows them.—In forgetfulness
Let them be buried; only recollect
Thine own: and, rivalling thy former fame,
Seek only to surpass thyself to-day.

Ab. I hitherto believed myself the leader:
David was not here then: I ventured hence
To order all things for the victory:
Hear what I should have done, had I commanded.—
Full in our front, from north to south, the camp
Of the Philistines fills the valley's length.
Behind it rise thick bushes; 'tis defended
By lofty banks in front: eastward 'tis flank'd
By a not lofty hill, of gentle slope
Towards the camp, but rough, precipitous,
Upon the other side; an ample outlet
Lies amid mountains to the west, through which
By a vast plain the traveller may go,
Exempt from hindrance, to the murmuring sea.
There, if we thither can decoy our foes,
Our triumph in the war will be assured.
But, to accomplish that, 'tis needful first
To feign retreat. In three battalions form'd,
If we towards the valley's left side bend,
We shall in front encounter their right flank.
The first battalion with forced march advances,
And seems to fly; the second, moving slowly,
Remains behind, in thin, disorder'd ranks,
A sure temptation to the enemy.
Meanwhile, a band conspicuous for its valor
The rugged hill towards the east has gain'd,
And on the rear of the invading host
Re-issues. Thus in front is it enclosed,
Behind, transversely; and behold we make
A dreadful, universal carnage of it.

Da. Equally wise and valorous art thou.
Nothing, O Abner, should be alter'd now
In thy arrangements. Valor I commend
Wherever found: a soldier I will be,
And not a leader: and my coming here
Shall, by addition of a sword alone,
Alter thy battle.

Ab. David is the leader:
David is master of our armies. Who
Combats, compared with him?
Da. Who less indeed
Should stoop to jealousy than Abner, since
He is so highly gifted? Excellent,
However I behold it, is thy scheme.
Myself and Jonathan beside the tent
Of Saul shall combat; further, tow'rds the north,
Uz shall advance; with thousand chosen men
Zadok the eastern eminence shall gain;
And thou, with greatest numbers, shall command
The body of the army.
Ab. This to thee
Belongs; it is the place of honor.
Da. Hence
I place thee there.—As yet the sun ascends:
Thou shalt keep all in steady preparation;
But till the fourth hour of the afternoon
Be not the trumpets heard. Thou seeest how
A furious west wind blows; the dazzling sun
And driven dust will, tow'rds the close of day,
Assist our enterprise.
Ab. Thou speakest wisely.
Da. Now, go; command: and do not from thyself,
With base and courtly artifice, of which
Thou shouldst be ignorant, avert that praise,
Which, as a captain, thou so well deservest.

Scene II.

DAVID.

Da. The order of the fight is wise and subtle.—
But, if he have not gain'd his soldiers' hearts,
What boots the foresight of a general?
Of this alone is Abner destitute;
And this to me God grants. To-day we conquer;
To-morrow once more will I leave the king;
For never by his side can there be peace
For me . . . What do I say? New victory
Would be ascribed to me as a new crime.

Scene III.

MICHAL, DAVID.

Mi. My spouse, hast thou not heard? My father scarce
Rose from a joyous banquet, when towards him
Abner advanced, and spake to him an instant:
I enter'd, he retired; I found the king
No longer what he was.
Da. But yet, what said he?
What couldest thou infer?...
Mi. Just now was he
Devoted to our cause; with us he wept;
Alternately embraced us; and from us,
As if in his defence, he prophesied
A race of future heroes; he appear'd
To us, as he said this, more than a father:
More than a king he now appears to me.
Da. Ah! do not weep, O wife, before the time:
Saul is the king; his will in us must be
Accomplish'd. So that he to-day may lose not
The battle; let him 'gainst myself to-morrow
Resume his cruel thoughts; I will resume
My abject state, my bitter banishment,
My fugitive and apprehensive life.
My true and only death will be to leave thee:
And yet I ought to do it... Ah, vain hopes!
Ah, nuptial ties for thee how inauspicious!
Another spouse a happy regal state
Had given thee; and I deprive thee of it.
Unhappy I!... Nor canst thou make me now,
Thy ever fugitive and homeless consort,
The father of a num'rous blooming offspring...
Mi. Ah, no! we never shall again be parted:
No one shall dare to rend thee from my breast.
I never will return, no, never more,
To that unhappy life which I dragg'd on
Deprived of thee: the tomb shall sooner hold me.
I languish'd in that palace of despair,
Alone and weeping, through the tedious days;
The shades of night with dreadful dreams were fraught.
Now, I beheld my cruel father's sword

Suspended o'er thy head; thy voice I heard
Persuasive, weeping, supplicating, fit
To drive all cruel feelings from the breast;
And yet the barbarous Saul, in spite of this,
Plunged in thy heart the dagger: now, I saw thee
'Mid secret labyrinths of darksome caves,
Making thy couch of the unyielding flint;
While at the motion of each rustling leaf
Thy faint heart trembled; and thou sought'st another;
And thence another; yet without once finding
A place of rest, or quietness, or friends:
Sick, anxious, weary . . . worn with parching thirst . . .
O Heav'ns! . . . How tell my anguish, doubts, long trembling?—
No more, no, never will I leave thee; never . . .
Da. Thou torturest my heart: ah, cease! . . . This day
To blood is consecrated, not to tears.
Mi. Provided that an obstacle to-day
Arise not to thy fighting. I fear not
The fight on thy account; thou hast a shield
Proof against all assaults, Almighty God:
But I am fearful lest perfidious Abner
Frustrate on thy account, or intercept
The victory to-day.
Da. And what? did Saul
Appear to thee to hesitate to trust
The conduct of the enterprise to me?
Mi. I heard not that; but sternly did he frown,
And whisper'd to himself I know not what
Of trait'rous priests; of strangers in the camp;
Of simulated virtue . . . Broken, dark,
Mournful, tremendous words, to her who is
The wife of David and the child of Saul.
Da. Behold him: let us hear.
Mi. Just God! I pray Thee,
Succor to-day Thy consecrated servant:
Confound blasphemers; give my father light;
Protect my husband; and defend Thy people.

Scene IV.

SAUL, JONATHAN, MICHAL, DAVID.

Jon. Ah come, belovèd father; to thy thoughts
Allow a little respite: the pure air
Will bring thee some refreshment; come: and sit
A little while among thy children now.
Sa. . . . What are those words I hear?
Mi. Belovèd father! . . .
Sa. Who, who are ye? . . . Who speaks of pure air here? . . .
This? 'tis a thick impenetrable gloom;
A land of darkness; and the shades of death . . .
O see! Come nearer me; dost thou observe it?
A fatal wreath of blood surrounds the sun . . .
Heard'st thou the singing of ill-omen'd birds?
The vocal air resounds with loud laments
That smite my ears, compelling me to weep . . .
But what? Ye, ye weep also? . . .
Jon. Mighty God
Of Israel, dost Thou thus Thy face avert
From Saul the king? Is he, Thy servant once,
Abandon'd to the adversary thus?
Mi. Father, thy much-loved daughter is beside thee:
If thou art cheerful, she is also cheerful;
She, if thou weepest, weeps . . . But, wherefore now
Should we shed tears? For joy hath reappear'd.
Sa. David, thou meanest. Ah! . . . Why doth not David
Also embrace me with my other children?
Da. O father! . . . I have been restrain'd by fear
Of importuning thee. Ah! why canst thou
Not read my heart? I evermore am thine.
Sa. Thou lovest then . . . the house . . . of Saul?
Da. I love it?
O Heav'ns! Dear as the apple of mine eye
To me is Jonathan; I neither know,
Nor heed a peril in the world, for thee;
Let my wife, if she can, say with what love,
And how much love, I love her . . .
Sa. Yet, thyself
Thou mightily dost prize . . .

Da. I, prize myself? . . .
No despicable soldier in the camp,
In court thy son-in-law, I deem myself;
And nothing, nothing in the sight of God.
Sa. Incessantly to me of God thou speakest;
Yet, thou well knowest that the crafty rage,
Cruel, tremendous, of perfidious priests,
Has for a long time sever'd me from God.
Dost thou thus name Him to insult me?
Da. I
Name Him, to give Him glory. Why dost thou
Believe that He no longer is with thee?
He doth not dwell with him who loves Him not:
But, doth He ever fail to succor him
Who doth invoke Him, and who hath reposed
In Him implicit trust? He to the throne
Appointed thee; and on that throne He keeps thee:
And if in Him, in Him exclusively
Thou dost confide, He's thine, and thou art His.
Sa. Who speaks of Heav'n? . . . Is he in snowy vest
Enrobed who thus his sacred lip unseals?
Let's see him . . . No: thou art a warrior: thou
Graspest the sword: approach; and let me see,
If David thus or Samuel doth accost me.—
What sword is this? 'Tis not the same, methinks,
Which I, with my own hands, on thee bestow'd . . .
Da. This is the sword that my poor sling acquired.
The sword that over me in Elah hung
Threat'ning my life; in fierce Goliath's hands
I saw it flash a horrid glare of death
Before my eyes: he grasp'd it: but it bears
Not mine, but his coagulated blood.
Sa. Was not that sword, a consecrated thing,
In Nob, within the tabernacle hung?
Was it not wrapp'd within the mystic Ephod,
And thus from all unhallow'd eyes conceal'd?
Devoted to the Lord of hosts for ever? . . .
Da. 'Tis true; but . . .
Sa. Whence didst thou obtain it, then?
Who dared to give it? who? . . .
Da. I will explain.

Pow'rless and fugitive to Nob I came:
Wherefore I fled, thou knowest. Ev'ry path
Was crowded with unhappy wretches; I,
Defenceless, found myself at ev'ry step
Within the jaws of death. With humble brow
I kneel'd within the tabernacle, where
God's Spirit doth descend: and there, these arms
(Which if a living man might to his side
Refit them, David surely was that man)
Myself demanded of the priest.
Sa. And he? . . .
Da. Gave them to me.
Sa. He was?
Da. Ahimelech.
Sa. Perfidious traitor! . . . Vile! . . . Where is the altar? . . .
O rage! . . . Ah, all are miscreants! traitors all! . . .
The foes of God; are ye his ministers? . . .
Black souls in vestments white . . . Where is the axe? . . .
Where is the altar? let him be destroy'd . . .
Where is the off'ring? I will slay him . . .
Mi. Father!
Jon. O Heav'ns! What mean these words? Where dost thou fly? . . .
Be pacified, I pray thee: there are not
Or altars here, or victims: in the priests
Respect that God who hears thee evermore.
Sa. Who thus restrains me? . . . Who resists me thus? . . .
Who forces me to sit? . . .
Jon. My father . . .
Da. Thou,
Great God of Israel, do Thou succor him!
Thy servant kneels to Thee, and this implores.
Sa. I am bereft of peace; the sun, my kingdom,
My children, and my pow'r of thought, all, all
Are taken from me! . . . Ah, unhappy Saul!
Who doth console thee? who is now the guide,
The prop of thy bewilder'd feebleness? . . .
Thy children all are mute; are harsh, and cruel . . .
And of the doting and infirm old man
They only wish the death: and nought attracts
My children, but the fatal diadem,

Which now is twined around thy hoary head.
Wrest it at once: and at the same time sever
From this now tremulous decaying form
Your father's palsied head . . . Ah, wretched state!
Better were death. I wish for death . . .
Mi. O father! . . .
We all desire thy life: we each of us
Would die ourselves, to rescue thee from death . . .
Jon. —Now, since in tears his fury is dissolved,
Brother, do thou, to recompose his soul,
Exert thy voice. So many times already
Hast thou enthrall'd him with celestial songs
To calm oblivion.
Mi. Yes; thou seeest now,
The breathing in his panting breast subsides;
His looks, just now so savage, swim in tears:
Now is the time to lend him thy assistance.
Da. May God in mercy speak to him through me.[1]—

Omnipotent, eternal, infinite,
Thou, who dost govern each created thing;
Thou, who from nothing mad'st me by Thy might,
Blest with a soul that dares to Thee take wing;
Thou, who canst pierce the' abyss of endless night,
And all its myst'ries into daylight bring;
The universe doth tremble at Thy nod,
And sinners prostrate own the outstretch'd arm of God.

Oft on the gorgeous blazing wings ere now
Of thousand cherubim wert Thou reveal'd;
Oft did Thy pure divinity endow
Thy people's shepherd in the martial field:
To him a stream of eloquence wert Thou;
Thou wert his sword, his wisdom, and his shield:
From Thy bright throne, O God, bestow one ray
To cleave the gath'ring clouds that intercept the day.

[1] All the following lyric verses may be sung by David without shakes, if he happens to be both a singer and actor. It will otherwise be sufficient, in order to produce a certain effect, if each stanza is preceded by a short instrumental musical passage, adapted to the subject; and if David then recites the stanza with majesty and gravity.

In tears of darkness we . . .

Sa. Hear I the voice
Of David? . . . From a mortal lethargy
It seems to wake me, and displays to me
The cheering radiance of my early years.

David.

Who comes, who comes, unseen, yet heard?
A sable cloud of dust appear'd,
Chased by the eastern blast.—
But it has burst; and from its womb
A thousand brandish'd swords illume
The track through which it pass'd . . .

Saul, as a tow'r, his forehead rears,
His head a flaming circlet wears.
The earth beneath his feet
Echoes with tramp of horse and men:
The sea, the sky, the hills, the plain,
The warlike sounds repeat.

In awful majesty doth Saul appear;
Horsemen and chariots from before him fly:
Chill'd by his presence is each heart with fear;
And god-like terrors lighten in his eye.

Ye sons of Ammon, late so proud,
Where now the scorn, the insults loud,
Ye raised against our host?
Your corpses more than fill the plain;
The ample harvest of your slain
Invalidates your boast.

See what it is thus to depend
On gods unable to defend.—
But wherefore from afar
Hear I another trumpet sound?
'Tis Saul's:—he levels with the ground
All Edom's sons of war.

Thus Moab, Zobah, by his arms laid low,
With impious Amalek, united fall:
Saul, like a stream fed by dissolving snow,
Defeats, disperses, overwhelms them all.

Sa. This is the voice of my departed years,
That from the tomb to glory now recalls me.
I live again in my victorious youth,
When I hear this . . . —What do I say? . . . Alas!
Should cries of war be now address'd to me? . . .
Oblivion, indolence, and peace, invite
The old man to themselves.
Da. Let peace be sung.—

Weary and thirsty, see he lies
Beside his native stream;
God's champion, whose past victories
Wake many a glorious dream.

The sigh'd-for laurel's evergreen
Doth screen his head from heat;
His children, all around him seen,
His sighs and smiles repeat.

They weep and smile, then smile and weep,
With sympathy endued;
And still a strict accordance keep
To ev'ry varying mood.

One daughter's gentle hand unfits
His crested helm and sword;
His consort fond beside him sits,
Embracing her loved lord.

The other doth clear water bring
From the pure ambient flood,
To cleanse his stately brows, where cling
Commingled dust and blood.

A cloud of odorous flow'rs she spreads,
Which breathe their perfumes near;

And on his honor'd hand she sheds
The duteous filial tear.

But why sits one apart reclined,
In pensive mood alone?
Alas, she mourns that others find
A task, while she has none.

But diff'rent thoughts, with eager haste,
Attract the band of boys;
Till his turn comes to be embraced,
One son himself employs
To make the blood-encrusted blade
From spot and blemish clear:
With envy fired, another said:
"When shall I poise that spear?

"That pond'rous lance when shall I wield,
That now defies my strength?"
Another grasps the blazon'd shield,
And stalks behind its length.

Then tears of sweet surprise,
From forth the swimming eyes
Of Saul are seen to roll:
For of his blooming race,
So full of royal grace,
He knows that he's the soul.

The pleasure how entire,
How happy is the sire,
Whose waking thoughts inspire
Affections so sincere!
But now the day is o'er;
The zephyrs breathe no more;
And sleep's soft pow'rs restore
The monarch we revere.—

Sa. Happy the father of a race like this!
O peace of mind, how precious are thy gifts! . . .
Through all my veins balsamic sweetness flows . .

But, what pretendest thou? To make Saul vile
Amid domestic ease? Does valiant Saul
Now lie an useless implement of war?

David.

The king reposes, but heroic dreams
With fearful pomp before his eyes parade,
Pregnant with death and visionary themes.
Behold, transfix'd with his victorious blade,
The conquer'd tyrant of the haughty foes,
All pow'r of harming gone, an awful shade.
Behold a flash that instantaneous glows . . .
It is Saul's brandish'd sword, that no man spares,
The weak and strong confounding with its blows.—
The dreaded lion thus sometimes forbears
To make the forest with his cries resound,
For even he in sleep his strength repairs;
But not the silence of his den profound,
Can courage to the trembling flocks restore;
Or make the swain with less fear look around,
For well he knows that he will prowl once more.

The monarch is roused from his slumbers:
"Arms, arms," he imperiously cries.
They are vanish'd,—the enemy's numbers;
What champion his valor defies?

I see, I see a track of fearful fire,
To which perforce the hostile squadrons yield.
Before the arms of Israel they retire,
Which, black with hostile gore, possess the field.

The wingèd thunderbolt huge stones doth shower,
And far less promptly doth the foe retreat,
Than our dread sov'reign in his mighty power
Pursue him, and his overthrow complete.

Like a proud eagle, his audacious flight,
Wing'd with immortal pinions, tow'rds the pole
He aims. His eyes are like the lightning bright;
His talons God's own thunderbolts control,

Annihilating those base sons of earth,
Who in false temples have false gods adored;
Whose gods impure to rites impure gave birth,
Who dare compare themselves with Israel's Lord.

Long, long have I pursued his ardent path;
Now it behoves me once more to pursue
His foes on earth; with heav'n-directed wrath
To trample down and crush Philistia's crew;

And with the' assistance of the God of hosts,
Prove that, as he, so I maintain his laws;
And prove that now the camp of Israel boasts
Two swords resistless in a righteous cause.[1]

Sa. Who, who thus boasts? Is there, except my sword,
Which I unsheathe, another in the camp?
He's a blasphemer, let him perish, he
Who dares defy it.
Mi. Ah forbear: O Heav'ns!...
Jon. Father, what wouldst thou do?...
Da. Unhappy king!
Mi. Ah fly!... Ah fly!... With difficulty we
Can hold him back. Dear husband, fly!

SCENE V.

JONATHAN, SAUL, MICHAL.

Mi. O stop,...
Belovèd father!...
Jon. I beseech thee, stop...
Sa. Who thus restrains me? who presumes to do it?...
Where is my sword? Restore my sword at once...
Jon. ... Do thou retire with us, belovèd father:
I will not let thee any farther go.
Behold, thy children now are all alone:
Return with us to thy pavilion: now

[1] The above poems are not written with any attempt to copy the metre of the original, of which they are in fact only paraphrases. But as a favorable specimen of Mr. Lloyd's poetical abilities, I have thought it best to leave them unaltered, except with a few necessary corrections.—E. A. B.

Thou needest quietness. Ah, come! Refrain
From causeless rage; thy children stand around thee . . .
Mi. And they shall never, never quit thy presence . . .

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

JONATHAN, MICHAL.

Mi. Jonathan, tell me; to my father's tent
May my dear spouse return?
Jon. Ah, no! with him
Saul is not reconciled; though he has fully
Regain'd his reason: but his jealousy
Is too profound; and slow will be his cure.
Return to David thou, and leave him not.
Mi. Alas! . . . Who is more wretched than myself? . . .
I have so well conceal'd him, that no man
Will ever find him: to this hiding-place
I now return to him.
Jon. O Heav'ns! behold,
My poor distracted father once more comes:
He never finds a resting-place.
Mi. Alas! . . .
What shall I say to him? . . . I will retire . . .

SCENE II.

SAUL, MICHAL, JONATHAN.

Sa. Who flies at my approach? Thou, woman, thou?
Mi. My lord . . .
Sa. Where, where is David?
Mi. . . . I know not . . .
Sa. Thou knowest not? . . .
Jon. My father . . .
Sa. Seek him then;
Go; bring him hither soon.
Mi. I seek him out? . . .
But, . . . tell me, where? . . .

Sa. It was thy king that spake,
And hast thou not obey'd him?

SCENE III.

SAUL, JONATHAN.

Sa. . . . Jonathan,
Lov'st thou thy father? . . .
Jon. Father! . . . yes, I love thee:
But, loving thee, I also love thy glory:
Hence, sometimes I oppose, far as a son
Ought to oppose, thine impulses unjust.
Sa. Often thy father's arm dost thou restrain:
But, thou dost turn against thyself that sword
Which thou avertest from another's breast.
Yes, yes, defend that David to the utmost;
Shortly will he . . . Dost thou not hear a voice
That in thy heart cries: "David will be king"?
—David? He shall be immolated first.
Jon. And doth not God, with a more dreadful voice,
Cry in thy heart: "My favorite is David;
"He is the chosen of the Lord of hosts"?
Doth not each act of his confirm this truth?
Was not the frantic and invidious rage
Of Abner silenced by his mere approach?
And thou, when thou re-enter'st in thyself,
Dost thou not find that, only at his presence,
All thy suspicions vanish like a cloud
Before the sun? And dost thou fondly dream,
When the malignant spirit visits thee,
That I restrain thy arm? 'Tis God restrains it.
Scarcely wilt thou have levell'd at his breast
Thy evil-brandish'd sword, when thou wilt be
Forced to withdraw it suddenly: in tears
Thou thyself prostrate at his feet wilt fall;
Yes, father, thou, repentant: for thou art
Indeed not impious . . .
Sa. But too true thy words.
A strange inexplicable mystery
This David is to me. No sooner I

In Elah had beheld him, than he pleased
My eyes; but never, never won my heart.
When I might almost be disposed to love him,
A fierce repulsion shoots athwart my breast,
And weans me from him: scarcely do I wish
For his destruction, than, if I behold him,
He straight disarms me, with such wonder fills me,
That in his presence I become a nothing . . .
Ah! this is surely, this the vengeance is
Of the inscrutable Almighty hand!
Tremendous hand, I now begin to know thee . . .
But what? why should I seek for reasons now? . . .
God have I ne'er offended: this is then
The vengeance of the priests. Yes, David is
An instrument of sacerdotal malice.
Expiring Samuel he beheld in Ramah:
The' implacable old man to him address'd
His dying words. Who knows, who knows if he
Upon the head of this my enemy
Pour'd not the sacred oil with which before
My brows he had anointed? P'rhaps thou knowest . . .
Speak . . . yes, thou knowest: I conjure thee, speak.
Jon. Father, I know not: but if it were so,
Should not I, equally with thee, esteem
Myself in this offended? Am not I
Thy eldest son? Dost thou not mean this throne
For me, when thou art gather'd to thy fathers?
If I then hold my peace, who else should dare
To make complaints at this? In fortitude
David surpasses me; in virtue, sense,
In ev'ry quality: and as the more
His worth surpasses mine, the more I love him.
Now, should that pow'r which gives and takes away
Kingdoms at will, bestow this throne on David,
What other greater proof can I require?
He is more worthy of that throne than I:
And God hath summon'd him to lofty deeds,
The shepherd of his children.—But meanwhile
I swear, that he has always been to thee
A faithful subject and a loyal son.
Now to that God to whom it doth belong,

The future yield: against that God, meanwhile,
Against the truth, ah, harden not thy heart.
If a divinity in Samuel spake not,
How could an undesigning, weak old man,
Half in the grave already, such effects
Produce by David's means? That mystery
Of love and hatred which thou feel'st for David;
That apprehension at a battle's name,
(A terror hitherto to thee unknown,)
Whence, Saul, can it proceed? Is there a power
On earth producing such effects as these? . . .

Sa. What language dost thou hold? A son of Saul
Art thou?—Feel'st thou no int'rest for the throne?—
Know'st not the cruel rights of him who'll hold it?
My house will be abolish'd, from the roots
Torn up, by him who seizes on my sceptre.
Thy sons, thy brothers, and thyself destroy'd . . .
Not one of Saul's descendants will remain . . .
O guilty and insatiable thirst
Of pow'r, what horrors canst thou not produce?
To reign, the brother immolates the brother;
Mothers their children; wives their consorts slay;
The son his father . . . Sacrilegious throne!
Thou art the seat of blood and cruelty.

Jon. Has man a shield against the sword of Heaven?
Not menaces or prayers can turn aside
The wrath of God omnipotent, who oft
The proud abases, and exalts the humble.

Scene IV.

SAUL, JONATHAN, ABNER, AHIMELECH, SOLDIERS.

Ab. King, if thy presence I behold once more,
Ere streams of hostile blood by my means flow,
To this by mighty reasons am I urged.
David, the doughty champion, in whose hands
Our victory was placed, has disappear'd.
Scarce is an hour now wanting to the time
Appointed for attack: thou now dost hear
The warriors, chafing with impatient ardor,
Filling with cries the air; the earth resounds,

Beaten with iron hoof of fiery steeds:
Howlings and neighings, and the blaze of helms,
And brandish'd swords, and loudly-echoing shouts,
Enough to make the veriest coward valiant; . . .
Yet who sees David?—Nowhere is he found.—
Behold, (authentic succor of the' Almighty!)
Behold, who in the camp stands in his place.
This man, in soft, white, sacerdotal stole
Enveloped, having gain'd the camp by stealth,
Tremblingly slunk beside the Benjamites.
Behold him; hear from him the lofty cause
Which to such peril guides him.
Ahi. I will speak it,
If not forbidden by the king's displeasure . . .
Sa. The king's displeasure? Thou dost then deserve it? . . .
Traitor, and who art thou? . . . It seems to me
That I should know thee well. Art thou not one
Of that fantastical and haughty flock
Of Ramah's seers?
Ahi. The ephod I am wearing:
I, of the Levites chief, to holy Aaron,
In that high ministry, to which the Lord
Elected him, after a long descent
Of other consecrated priests, succeed.
Near to the sacred ark in Nob I'm station'd:
The ark of covenant in former times
Stood in the centre of the camp: but now
'Tis deem'd too much, if e'en clandestinely
That camp is enter'd by God's minister:
Where Saul is monarch, a strange visitant
The priest is held: but he is not so, no,
Where Israel fights; if still, as formerly,
Through God we triumph.—Dost thou know me not?
What wonder? Dost thou better know thyself?—
Thou hast withdrawn thy footsteps from God's path;
And I within the tabernacle dwell,
Where dwells the great Jehovah; there, where thou
For a long time, O Saul, hast not been seen.
The name I go by is Ahimelech.
Sa. That name proclaims thee, as thou art, a traitor:

Now art thou recognized. Before my sight
Thou comest opportunely. Now confess,
Art thou not he, who to the banish'd David
Gav'st an asylum, nourishment, and safety,
Deliverance and arms? And, then, what arms!
Goliath's sacred sword, which, dedicated
To God, within the tabernacle hung,
Whence thou with hand profane removedst it,
And girdedst it on the perfidious foe
Of thy sole lord and king?—Thou comest, villain,
With treason to the camp: what doubt is there? . . .

Ahi. Assuredly, I to betray thee come;
Since on thy arms I come to ask of God
For victory, which He to thee denies.
Yes, I am he, who, with benignant hand,
Assisted David. But, who is that David?
Of the king's daughter is not he the husband?
Not the most valiant 'mid thy men of valor?
Not the most graceful, most humane, most just,
Of Israel's sons? Say, is he not in war
Thy shield, and thy defender? And in peace,
Is he not in thy palace, with his songs,
The master of thy heart? The love of maidens,
The people's joy, the terror of our foes;
Such, such was he whom I presumed to rescue.
And thou thyself, didst thou not erewhile choose him
For the first honors? Not select his arm
To guide thy battles? To bring back once more
The shout of triumph to the camp? To chase
That terror of defeat, which in thy heart
Thy God hath placed?—If thou condemnest me,
Thou, at the same time, dost condemn thyself.

Sa. Whence, whence in you springs pity? whence in you,
O cruel priests, revengeful, thirsty ever
For human blood? To Samuel did it seem
A crime unpardonable that I slew not
The king of Amalek, with arms in hand,
Taken in flight; a mighty king, a warrior,
Of ardent gen'rous temper, and profuse
Of his own life-blood in his people's service.—
Unhappy king! dragg'd in my presence, he

Came manacled: yet he preserved, though vanquish'd,
A noble pride, as far from insolence,
As from all abjectness. Of courage guilty
To cruel Samuel he appear'd: three times
In his defenceless bosom did he plunge,
With sacerdotal hand, the reeking sword.—
These are your battles, vile ones, these alone.
But, he who dares to lift his haughty brow
Against his lawful monarch, he, in you,
Finds an asylum, a support, a shield.
All other objects occupy your hearts,
More than the altar. Who, yes, who are ye?
A selfish, cruel, and malignant tribe,
Who, yourselves shelter'd, at our dangers laugh;
And, in your easy mantles wrapp'd, presume
To govern us who sweat in cumbrous mail:
Us, who, 'mid bloodshed, apprehension, death,
Lead, for our wives, our children, and yourselves,
Lives of distress and constant wretchedness.
Cowards, less dignified than idle women,
Would ye with lithe wands, and fantastic hymns,
O'er us, and o'er our weapons, arbitrate?

Ahi. And thou, who art thou? of the earth a king:
But, in God's sight, what king?—Examine, Saul,
Thyself; thou art but a crown'd heap of dust.—
I, by myself, am nothing; but I am
A thunderbolt, a whirlwind, and a tempest,
If God descends in me: that mighty God
Who fashion'd thee; Who if He only look
Upon thee, where is Saul?—It ill befits thee
To plead the cause of Agag; foolishly
Dost thou pursue him in forbidden paths.
For a perverse king, save the hostile sword,
Is there a punishment? And does a sword
Smite unpermitted by Almighty God?
God writes His vengeances in adamant;
Nor to Philistines less than Israel's sons
Does He commit them.—Tremble, Saul: I see
Already in a sable cloud on high,
Death's dreadful angel poised on fiery wings:
Already, with one hand hath he unsheathed

The pitiless, retributory sword;
And with the other, from thy guilty head
He plucks thy hoary tresses: tremble, Saul.—
There is who doth impel thee to destruction:
'Tis he; this Abner, brother he of Satan;
He, who hath poison'd with suspicions vile
Thy aged heart; he who hath dwindled thee
From a crown'd warrior to a less than child.
Thou, thou infatuate man, dost now remove
The only true and steadfast prop of thee
And of thy house. Where is the house of Saul?
On quicksands it is built; it shakes already;
It falls; it moulders into dust: 'tis gone.—
Sa. Prophet of my calamities art thou,
And not so of thy own. Thou hast not seen,
Ere to the camp thou camest, that death here
Awaited thee: this I predict; and soon
Shall Abner's hand this prophecy fulfil.—
My faithful Abner, go thou; change at once
All the arrangements of the impious David;
For ev'ry one of them conceals a plot.
To-morrow fight we with the rising sun;
That beauteous day-star, of my hardihood
Shall be the witness. I am now aware,
That from malignity the thought arose
In David's breast, to choose the afternoon
For the attack, as most indicative
Of my declining arm: but, we shall see.—
I feel my martial spirits braced afresh
By thy rebukes; to-morrow I am leader;
The livelong day will be inadequate
To the great slaughter which I shall inflict.—
Abner, now quickly from my presence drag
This miscreant, and dispatch him . . .
Jon. O my father! . . .
Great Heav'ns! . . . what art thou doing? . . .
Sa. Hold thy peace.—
He shall be slain; and his unworthy blood
Shall fall on the Philistines.
Ab. Death is his
Already . . .

Sa. But, to satisfy my vengeance
He only is too little. Let Nob feel
That vengeance also; let it smite, consume,
Servants, and cattle, mothers, houses, babes,
And to the desolating winds disperse
All the flagitious race. Thy priests may now
Exclaim with truth: "There is a Saul." My hand,
So oft by you provoked to homicide,
Never smote you: from hence, and hence alone,
You scorn that hand.
Ahi. No king can hinder me
From dying like a just man; whence my death
Will be as welcome as it is illustrious.
Yours, for a long time, by Almighty God
Have been irrevocably seal'd: by swords,
Yet not in battle, not by hostile swords,
Abner and thou shall both be vilely slain.—
Let me go hence.—I have at last address'd
God's final sentence to the reprobate,
And he was deaf: my mission is accomplish'd:
I have lived faithful, faithful shall I die.
Sa. Quick let him hence be dragg'd to punishment;
To agonizing and protracted death.

SCENE V.

SAUL, JONATHAN.

Jon. Alas! rash king, what art thou doing? pause . . .
Sa. Must I once more command thee to be silent?—
Art thou a warrior?—thou a son of mine?
Art thou a champion of the Israelites?—
Go, go; return to Nob; and there fill thou
His empty seat: thou worthy art alone
To live in indolence with drowsy priests,
Not 'mid the tumults of grim-visaged war,
Not 'mid the lofty cares of royalty . . .
Jon. I also at thy side in combat fierce
Have overcome, in multitudes, thy foes:
But this, which now thou dost presume to shed,
Is sacerdotal, not Philistine, blood.
Alone thou standest in a fight so impious.

Sa. I am alone sufficient for the contest,
Whate'er that contest be. Do thou to-morrow,
Base one, reluctantly the battle join:
I only shall be Saul. What then avails
David? or Jonathan? Saul is the leader.
Jon. Beside thee shall I fight. Ah! may I fall
Lifeless beneath thine eyes, before I see
That which awaiteth thy unhappy blood!
Sa. And what awaits it? death? death in the field?
This is a monarch's death.

SCENE VI.

MICHAL, SAUL, JONATHAN.

Sa. Thou, and no David? . . .
Mi. I cannot find him . . .
Sa. I will find him.
Mi. He
P'rhaps is far distant; he avoids thy anger . . .
Sa. Though he had wings, my anger should o'ertake him.
Woe, if in battle he presents himself:
Woe, if to-morrow, when my foes are conquer'd,
Thou bring'st him not to me.
Mi. O Heav'ns!
Jon. Ah, father . . .
Sa. I have no children.—Quickly, Jonathan,
Resume thy place among the troops.—And thou,
Seek, and find David.
Mi. Ah! . . . with thee . . .
Sa. In vain.
Jon. Father, shall I fight far from thee?
Sa. From me
Be all of you afar. Ye, all of you,
Vie with each other in betraying me.
Go, I command it: quickly fly from hence.

SCENE VII.

SAUL.

Sa. I to myself am left.—Myself alone,
(Unhappy king!) myself alone I dread not.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

DAVID, MICHAL.

Mi. Come forth, my consort; come: the night already
Is far advanced . . . Dost hear what mingled sounds
Issue from yonder camp? The fierce encounter
To-morrow's dawn will witness.—Round the tent
Where sleeps my father, ev'ry sound is hush'd.
Behold; the heav'ns themselves assist thy flight:
The moon is setting, and a black cloud veils
Her latest rays. Let us depart: for no one
Watches our footsteps now; let us depart;
We may descend the mountain by this slope,
And God, where'er we go, will be our guide.

Da. O spouse, the better portion of my soul,
While Israel is preparing for attack,
Can it be true that I prepare for flight?
And what is death, that I should thus avoid it?—
I will remain: Saul, if he will, may slay me;
So that I first in numbers slay the foe.

Mi. Ah! thou know'st not: already hath the rage
Of Saul in blood his lifted arm embrued.
Ahimelech, discover'd here, hath fallen
The victim of his violence already.

Da. What do I hear? Hath he indeed his sword
Turn'd on defenceless priests? Ill-fated Saul! . . .

Mi. Thou must hear more. The monarch gave himself
Cruel command to Abner, that, if thou
In battle shouldst be seen, our champions should
Against thee turn their arms.

Da. And Jonathan,
My friend, bears this?

Mi. O Heav'ns! what can he do?
He too endured his father's rage; and ran
Distractedly 'mid combatants to die.
Now, thou see'st clearly, thou canst not stay here:
Thou'rt forced to yield; to fly from hence; and wait,
Or that my father change, or that he bend

Beneath the weight of years . . . Ah, cruel father!
'Tis thou thyself dost force thy wretched daughter
To wish the fatal day . . . But yet, O no,
Thy death I do not wish for: live in peace;
Live, if thou canst; 'twill be enough for me
To dwell for ever in my consort's presence . . .
Ah, come then; let us go . . .
Da. How much I grieve
To leave the fight! I hear an unknown voice
Cry in my heart: "For Israel and its king
"The dreadful day is come . . ." Could I! . . . But no:
The guiltless blood of sacred ministers
Was here pour'd out: the camp is now impure,
Contaminate the soil; the face of God
Is hence averted: David now no more
Can combat here.—It is my duty, then,
To yield awhile to thy anxiety,
And careful love.—But, thou must yield to mine . . .
Ah! suffer me alone . . .
Mi. What! shall I leave thee?
Behold, I clasp thee by thy garment's hem;
No, never more I part from thee . . .
Da. Ah, hear me!
Ill could thy tardy steps keep pace with mine:
Paths rough with stocks and stones shall I be forced
To tread with indefatigable feet,
If I would seek, complying with thy wish,
A place of refuge. How can thy soft limbs
Bear up against the unaccustom'd torment?
And shall I in the wilderness alone
Ever abandon thee? Thou seeest clearly;
Owing to thee, I soon should be discover'd:
Quickly would both of us be reconducted
To the fear'd vengeance of the king . . . O Heav'ns!
The mere thought makes me shudder . . . Further grant,
That we ensured our flight; can I remove thee
From thy sick sorrowing father? He is placed
Far from the dainty shelter of his palace,
Amid the hardships of a camp: his pangs,
His irritable age, some solace need.
Ah! soothe his grief, his fury, and his tears.

Thou only pleasest him; thou waitest on him,
And thou alone preservest him alive.
He wishes me destroy'd; but I would see him
Rescued from danger, happy, and triumphant: . . .
To-day I tremble for him.—Ere thou wert
A wife, thou wert a daughter; 'tis not right
To love me overmuch. If I escape,
What further canst thou wish for me at present?
From thy already too-afflicted father
Do not depart. As soon as I'm in safety,
I'll cause the tidings to be sent to thee;
We shall, I hope, be reunited soon.
Think what it costs me to abandon thee . . .
Yet, . . . how? . . . alas! . . .
Mi. Ah! must I once more lose thee? . . .
Once more permit thee to return alone
To former labors, to a wand'ring life,
To perils, and to solitary caves? . . .
Ah, if I only always were with thee! . . .
I might, perchance, alleviate thy ills, . . .
By sharing them with thee . . .
Da. I do beseech thee,
By our affection; and, if there be need,
I also do command thee, as a lover;
Do not now follow me; thou canst not do it,
Without ensuring my effectual ruin.—
But, if God will my safety, I ought not
To tarry longer here: the time advances:
Some spy from his pavilion might detect us,
And cruelly divulge our purposes.
I know each single corner of these hills;
And feel most certain that I can elude
All human vigilance.—Give, give me now
The last embrace. May God be thy support!
And do thou never, never quit thy father,
Till Heav'n once more unite thee to thy consort . . .
Mi. The last embrace? . . . And shall I then survive it? . . .
I feel, I feel my trembling heart-strings burst . . .
Da. . . . And I? . . . But, . . . I beseech thee . . . check thy tears.—
Wings to my feet now lend, Almighty God!

Scene II.

MICHAL.

Mi. . . . He flies? . . . O Heav'ns! . . . I will pursue him now . . .
But, with what iron fetters am I bound? . . .
I cannot follow him.—He flies from me! . . .
Scarce can I stand, much less o'ertake his steps . . .
Once more, then, have I lost him! . . . Who can tell,
When I shall see him? . . . And art thou a wife,
Thou wretched woman? . . . were thine nuptial rites? . . .
—No, no; no more beside my cruel father
Will I remain. I follow thee, O spouse . . .—
Yet, if I follow him, alas! I kill him;
Can I, to imitate his rapid steps,
Dissemble my slow pace? . . . —But, from yon camp
What murmur do I hear, like din of arms? . . .
I hear it plainly . . . and it waxes louder;
And with the trumpet's dissonance is mix'd . . .
The tramp of horses also . . . What is this? . . .
The fight before the rising of the sun,
Of this gave Saul no hint. Who knows? . . . Perchance
My brothers . . . Jonathan . . . Alas! . . . in danger . . .—
But, tears, and howlings, and deep groans I hear
From the pavilion of my father rise? . . .
Unhappy father! . . . I will run to meet him . . .
But . . . he himself approaches; O sad sight! . . .
How desolate he looks! . . . Alas, my father! . . .

Scene III.

SAUL, MICHAL.

Sa. Incensed, tremendous shade, ah, go thy way!
Leave, leave me! . . . See: before thy feet I kneel . . .
Where can I fly? . . .—where can I hide myself?
O fierce, vindictive spectre, be appeased . . .
But to my supplications it is deaf;
And does it spurn me? . . . Burst asunder, earth,
Swallow me up alive . . . Ah! that at least
The fierce and threat'ning looks of that dire shade
May not quite pierce me through . . .

Mi. From whom dost fly?
No one pursues thee. Dost thou see me not,
Father? dost thou not know me?
Sa. O most high,
Most holy priest, wilt thou that here I pause?
O Samuel, thou my real father once,
Dost thou command it? Prostrate, see, I fall
At thy supreme command. Thou, with thy hand,
Placedst the royal crown upon this head;
Thou didst adorn it; strip it, strip it now
Of all its honors; tread them under foot.
But O,... the flaming sword of God's revenge
Which glares eternally before my eyes,...
Thou, who canst do it, snatch it not from me,
O no, but from my children. Of my crime,
My children they are innocent...
Mi. O state
Of agony unparallel'd!—Thy sight
Bodies forth things that are not: father, turn
Thyself to me...
Sa. O joy!... Is peace inscribed
Upon thy face? O fierce old man, hast thou
In part my prayers accepted? from thy feet
I will not rise, till thou hast first deliver'd
My unoffending children from thy vengeance.—
What voice exclaim'd: "And David was thy son;
"And thou didst persecute him, e'en to death"?
Of what dost thou accuse me?... Pause, O pause!...
David, where is he? find him: let him come;
And let him slay me at his will, and reign:
Provided only that he spare my children,
Be his the throne...—But, art thou pitiless?
Thine eyes are orbs of blood; thy hand is fire,
And fire thy sword; thy ample nostrils breathe
Sulphureous flames, that glare and dart at me...
They've caught me now; they burn my heart to dust:
Where shall I fly?... I'll go in this direction.
Mi. Cannot my hands restrain thee, nor my voice
Convince thee of the truth? Ah, hear me: thou...
Sa. But no; on this side a prodigious stream
Of blood restrains my steps. Atrocious sight!

On both its shores in mountains are up-piled
Great heaps of recent corpses: all is death
On this side: thitherward I then will fly...
But what do I behold? Who then are ye?—
"We are the children of Ahimelech.
"I am Ahimelech. Die, Saul, then, die."—
What cry is that? I recognize him well:
With recent blood he reeks; let him drink mine.
And who is this that drags me from behind?
Thou, Samuel, thou?—What did he say? that soon
We all should be with him? I only, I
Shall be with thee; but as for my poor children...
Where am I?—In an instant from my sight
Have all the spectres vanish'd. Where am I?
What have I said? What am I doing? Who
Art thou? What dissonance is this I hear?
It seems to me most like the din of battle:
But the day dawns not yet: ah yes, it is
The uproar of the battle. Quickly bring
My shield, my spear, my helmet: now with speed
The weapons, the king's weapons. I will die,
But in the camp.

Mi. What art thou doing, father?
Be tranquil... To thy daughter...

Sa. I will have
My arms; what daughter? Now, thou dost obey me.
My helm, my spear, my shield; behold my children.

Mi. I will not leave thee, no...

Sa. The trumpets sound
Louder and louder? Thither let me go:
For me my sword alone will be sufficient.—
Thou, quit me, go; obey. I thither run:
There, where the death I seek for has its home.

Scene IV.

SAUL, MICHAL, ABNER, *with a few fugitive Soldiers.*

Ab. O hapless king!... Now whither dost thou fly?
This is a dreadful night.

Sa. But, why this battle?...

Ab. The foe assail'd us unawares: we are
Wholly discomfited...

Sa. Discomfited?
And liv'st thou, traitor?
Ab. I? I live to save thee.
Hither perchance Philistia's hordes are streaming:
We are compell'd to shun the first attack:
Meanwhile the day will dawn. Thee will I lead,
With my few followers, to yonder slopes...
Sa. Shall I then live, while all my people fall?
Ab. Ah, come!... Alas! the tumult grows: approaches...
Sa. My children,... Jonathan,... do they too fly?
Do they abandon me?...
Ab. O Heav'ns!... Thy children,...
No, no; they fled not... Ill-starr'd progeny!...
Sa. I understand thee: they are all destroy'd...
Mi. Alas!... My brothers?...
Ab. Thou no more hast sons.
Sa. —What now remains for me?... Thou, thou alone,
But not for me, remainest.—In my heart
Have I been long time finally resolved:
And now the hour is come.—This, Abner, is
The last of my commands. My daughter now
Guide to some place of safety.
Mi. Father, no;
Around thee will I twine myself: the foe
Will never aim a sword against a woman.
Sa. O daughter!... say no more: compel me not
To weep. A conquer'd king should never weep.
Save her, O Abner, go: but, if she fall
Within the foeman's hands, say not, O no,
That she's the child of Saul; but rather tell them
That she is David's wife; they will respect her.
Go; fly...
Ab. She shall, I swear to thee, be safe,
If I can aught avail; but thou meantime...
Mi. My father... ah!... I will not, will not leave thee...
Sa. I will it: and I yet am king. But see,
The armèd bands approach. Fly, Abner, fly:
Drag her by force with thee, if it be needful.
Mi. O father!... and for ever?...

SCENE V.

SAUL.

Sa. O my children!...
—I was a father.—See thyself alone,
O king; of thy so many friends and servants,
Not one remains.—Inexorable God,
Is Thy retributory wrath appeased?—
But, thou remain'st to me, O sword: now come,
My faithful servant in extremity.—
Hark, hark! the howlings of the haughty victors:
The flashing of their burning torches glares
Before my eyes already, and I see
Their swords by thousands...—O thou vile Philistia,
Me thou shalt find, but like a king, here... dead.[1]—

[1] As he falls transfixed on his own sword, the victorious Philistines come up to him in a crowd with blazing torches and bloody swords. While they rush with loud cries towards Saul, the curtain falls.

XV.

AGIS.

THE ARGUMENT.

AGIS IV. occupied the throne of Sparta jointly with Leonidas, whose daughter Agiziade (or Agiatis) he had married.[1] Agis, who was only twenty-three at the time of his death, which took place about 240 B.C., was of a noble character, and desired to restore the ancient laws of Lycurgus, and a real equality between the rich and poor, by the abolition of all debts and an equal division of the lands of the country. His measures were naturally distasteful to the powerful oligarchy, and also to his colleague Leonidas, who had been brought up in a luxurious Asiatic court. His own mother Agesistrata supported him in his reforms, as did her brother Agesilaus, who, being deeply in debt himself, was anxious for the fulfilment of that part of the scheme. By the influence of the reforming party, Leonidas was banished. His daughter preferred accompanying him in his exile to remaining with her husband, Agis, in his time of triumph. Agis, however, had to leave Sparta to take the command of the army, and in his absence a popular rising took place in favor of Leonidas, who at the beginning of the play had just been restored to the throne, whilst Agis, to save his life from the fickle multitude, took refuge in the sanctuary. The remaining character in the tragedy, besides Agis, his mother, his wife, and Leonidas, is Amphares, head of the Ephori or magistrates, and a devoted partisan of Leonidas.

[1] According to Plutarch, however, Agis's wife, Agiatis, was not the daughter of Leonidas, but afterwards his daughter-in-law.

At the commencement, Amphares congratulates Leonidas on his restoration, but the latter considers that he will not be secure on his throne whilst Agis lives. Amphares reminds him that Agis had once saved his life when threatened by Agesilaus, and advises caution in his proceedings against him. Agesistrata enters, on her way to the asylum of Agis, and advocates his cause. Leonidas tells her that, unless he comes forth the next day and exculpates himself, he shall be dethroned. Amphares advises her to use her influence with him to come to an understanding with Leonidas and his victorious party.

The next Act shows Agis leaving the sanctuary, to avoid the charge of seeking shelter there against the punishment of his alleged misdeeds. His wife comes, tells him that now he is no longer in prosperity she has rejoined him, and implores him to be reconciled to Leonidas, to abandon his schemes, and resume his joint rule with her father. Agis tells her that the day of his death is probably approaching, and entreats her to train up their children in the love of liberty. His mother then enters, followed by an armed crowd, who, she informs him, are ready to defend his cause; but he rejects their assistance, and announces his intention of pleading his own case before assembled Sparta. Amphares appears, and on the part of the Ephori states that, if he will withdraw all his new laws, he shall be restored to the throne. Agis, in reply, asks for an interview with Leonidas.

In the third Act, Leonidas, attended by his soldiers, holds the desired interview with Agis. The latter recalls the past circumstances which had led to Leonidas being driven into exile, and urges him to promulgate the laws of Lycurgus and introduce perfect equality, in which case he offers his own life as a sacrifice, and promises Leonidas eternal glory. Leonidas, having heard all that Agis has to urge, orders him into custody, to prevent his returning to the sanctuary, and rejoices in having at length got him entirely in his power. All the entreaties of the wife and mother of Agis are insufficient to turn him from his purpose of effecting the ruin of his former colleague and now prisoner.

We next see Leonidas planning with Amphares the

means of securing the condemnation of Agis by a packed tribunal of Ephori and Senators, from which nearly all the real people of Sparta should be excluded. When the tribunal is assembled, Leonidas sends Amphares to bring Agis before them, and artfully harangues the judges with a view to prejudice them against Agis, although he protests that he intends to be guided solely by their decision. Amphares now introduces Agis surrounded by guards. Amphares accuses him as an arbitrary tyrant, who has betrayed the trust reposed in him. Agis makes a noble defence, after denouncing the tribunal as not really representing the people; and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Amphares, those of the people who are present are worked upon by his eloquence to believe in his innocence of the crimes alleged against him. When he has returned to his prison, Leonidas professes to speak in his favor, and also retires. When the question is put by Amphares, the Ephori pronounce him guilty, and sentence him to death. The people ask for his pardon, and the shouts of the multitude advancing to rescue Agis are heard in the distance.

The fifth Act opens with Agis in prison, prepared for death, and awaiting his executioners. His wife enters, having escaped from the confinement in which her father had placed her, and announces her intention of dying with him, if rescue is impossible. But Agis persuades her to live for the sake of their children, and they take a tender farewell of each other. His mother then comes, bringing two swords, announces that the friends of Agis are overpowered by the followers of Leonidas, and proclaims her intention of slaying herself with one of the swords, when he has killed himself with the other. Leonidas and Amphares appear, attended by their soldiers, who are ordered by Leonidas to slay both Agis and his mother. Struck by the majesty of Agis's demeanor, they fall back awe-struck. Agis tells Leonidas to prevent Agiziade from following his example, and stabs himself. Agesistrata instantly does the same.

The story of Agis, in which Alfieri has in the main followed Plutarch's Life of Agis (although, in the original,

Agis, his mother and grandmother, were all strangled by order of Amphares), has also been made the subject of tragedies, under the same name, by Guérin de Bouscal in 1642, Laignelot in 1782, and Crébillon. The last was left unfinished, and was supposed to be intended to represent the death of Charles I., to whose memory it will be seen that Alfieri inscribed his play in a remarkable dedication. According to the real history, it was Cleómbrotus (who reigned with Agis after the expulsion of Leonidas), and not Agis himself, that married the daughter of Leonidas, who showed such touching devotion to her father and husband in turn, in their respective times of adversity. After the death of Agis, his widow, Agiatis, was forcibly married by Leonidas to his son Cleomedes.

Alfieri took extreme care in revising this play, which he calls "the fourth of his tragedies of liberty," in which that "divine passion" assumes an entirely new aspect from being so firmly rooted in the heart of a king,—a thing in his time impossible, and difficult to be understood by any but the Greeks and Romans. Judging the work by modern notions, he considers it a tragedy the sublimity of which is more ideal than probable, and therefore little fit to rouse the enthusiasm of a modern audience. He describes Leonidas as a vulgar king; Agesistrata as a Spartan mother; Agiziade as a most affectionate wife and mother; and Amphares as an infamous minister of an absolute king, rather than an independent magistrate in a mixed government. He anticipates that some will pronounce it an excellent tragedy, many a mediocre one, and a few a bad one, but thinks it is the business of the two latter classes to give reasons for their opinions.

DEDICATION

TO

HIS MAJESTY CHARLES THE FIRST,

KING OF ENGLAND.

It seems to me that I may dedicate my *Agis* without meanness or arrogance to an unfortunate and dead king.

As you received your death from the sentence of an unjust parliament, so this king of Sparta received his from the wicked judgment of the Ephori. But just as the effects were similar, so far were the causes different. Agis, by re-establishing equality and liberty, wished to restore to Sparta her virtue and her splendor; hence he died full of glory, leaving behind him an everlasting fame. You, by attempting to violate all limits to your authority, falsely wished to procure your own private good: hence nothing remains of you; and the ineffectual compassion of others alone accompanied you to the tomb.

The designs of Agis, generous and sublime, were afterwards happily prosecuted, and with much glory to himself, by Cleomenes, his successor, who found the whole prepared. Your designs, common to the herd of monarchs, were, and are, perpetually attempted by many other princes, and also carried into effect, but uniformly without fame. In my opinion, one can in no way make a tragedy of your tragical death, the cause of it not being sublime: I should always have thought, even if I had not attempted to do it, that from the death of Agis, the true

grandeur of the Spartan king being considered, a noble tragedy might be constructed.

Both the one and the other were, and will be, a memorable example to the people, and a terrible one to kings: but with this great difference between them, that many other kings have been, and will be, like Your Majesty; but none like Agis.

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

MARTINSBURGH, *May* 9, 1786.

AGIS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AGIS.	*Ephori.*
LEONIDAS.	*Senators.*
AGESISTRATA.	*People.*
AGIZIADE.	*Soldiers of Leonidas.*
AMPHARES.	

SCENE.—*The Forum, afterwards the Prison, of Sparta.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

LEONIDAS, AMPHARES.

Am. Behold, Leonidas, thou once more sittest
Upon thy royal throne. The whole of Sparta,
Or of her citizens the better part,
Those who are truly and maturely wise,
The lovers of the public weal, have turn'd
Their eyes to thee, expecting, by thy means,
To gain a respite from their long distress.
Le. Yet thence I do not deem, while Agis lives,
That I am king of Sparta. He not only
Lives, but reigns also in the hearts of many.
This temple is to him a place of refuge,
Whose neighboring forum ev'ry day is fill'd
With a tumultuous audacious throng,
Who still would have him for their king, and cry
For him once more my partner on the throne.
Am. And fearest thou to be by him o'ercome?

I swear, and all the other Ephori
Swear likewise; Agis ne'er again shall reign.
But art is rather needful now than force . . .
Le. Lately had he such influence acquired,
That he had dared, with his contrivances,
And with his new and ill-imagined laws,
To overturn all Spartan institutes
By open force, and from the throne to drive
Me into exile: ought I, on that throne
Reseated by my faithful Spartans, now
To take revenge on him by hidden schemes?
Am. Thou art compell'd to stoop to stratagems:
He is thy son-in-law. The day that thou
In cruel banishment, alone, abandon'd,
Robb'd of thy royal crown, from Sparta wentest,
He show'd thee kindness. To the fierce assassins,
That in pursuit of thee, to spill thy blood,
Agesilaus sent, with open force
Agis opposed himself; and led thee safe
(Thou must remember) to Tegæa's confines:
In this one act alone he did not seem
The son of Agesistrata, in this
Openly adverse to her guilty brother.
Thou only now canst prosecute thy vengeance
By feign'd concernment for the public good.
Le. A worthless gift he made me of my life,
The day that he expell'd me from the throne;
And as an injury most exquisite
Should I impute it to him. Me he deem'd
A foe no longer to be fear'd? to-day
Will I in this completely undeceive him.
That he's my son-in-law, redoubles in me
My hatred tow'rds him. Son-in-law to me?
Ah! what was my mistake in giving him
A woman so dissimilar in marriage!
No reparation but his death remains.
That dear Agiziade, my only daughter,
Was my companion, and my only solace,
During my long and dreary exile. She
Abandon'd her belovèd spouse, since he
Was hostile to her father; she esteem'd

The ties of nature more imperative
Than those of love: and she would rather drag
A wretched wand'ring life with me, than share
The throne with my unworthy adversary.
Am. Yet, in proportion as thy wrath is just,
Suppress its workings, if thou wouldst indulge it.
Not less than thou I hate the haughty Agis;
And his parade of antiquated virtues,
Feign'd to reflect on us. It is a folly
No less ambitious than malevolent,
To seek to rivet Sparta with those chains
That erst Lycurgus framed: yet his design
Has no less scope than this; hence had his rule
Reduced our city to extremity:
And, still distracted, languishing she lies,
In tumults, and perplexities involved.
But all things change with time: those factious traitors,
The Ephori, Agesilaus' slaves,
And more to him devoted than to Agis,
Are all with him now banish'd or destroy'd;
And Sparta now in us alone is centred.
But the flagitious, discontented people,
Always desirous of new men and measures,
Still, as a means to their pernicious views,
Their suffrage give to Agis. Ill can we
Restrain them by mere force; it is not safe
In a new government to use coercion.
The people may, with less of peril, be
Deluded than compell'd. Leave thou to me
This enterprise, in which, not less than thine,
My heart an int'rest takes. Behold, the mother
Of Agis hither comes: this lady makes
In the affections of the Spartans progress
From day to day: she also should be fear'd.

Scene II.

AGESISTRATA, LEONIDAS, AMPHARES.

Ages. Who interrupts my footsteps? While I go
To the asylum of the Spartan monarch,
Around these confines do I now behold
Another, and new king of Sparta stalk?

Le. And had I an asylum in the world
On that disastrous day, when, Sparta's king,
From Sparta I was driven? Many a day
I lived in exile from the throne; and lived,
Which is far worse, apparently a culprit.
Grief would have slain me, if my innocence,
Together with my majesty usurp'd,
Had not been fully to myself restored
By wiser counsels of that very Sparta.
Cleómbrotus, my execrable rival,
Banish'd from Sparta, he, to whom thy Agis,
Master of all things then, my sceptre gave,
Himself made my defence. To make his own,
Why delays Agis? He was on the throne
My colleague; still he is my son-in-law;
And may, if so it please him, be my foe.—
But say, what other cause, except his guilt,
Detains him now imprison'd in the temple?

Ages. Leonidas, to Sparta and to me
Thou art but too well known: what are thy faults,
And what are those of Agis, is express'd
In a few words. Agis wish'd Sparta free;
Equal her citizens, courageous, strong,
And terrible; true Spartans: and he wish'd
Not to be paramount to any man,
Except in magnanimity and virtue.
Rich, mercenary, sunk in indolence,
Effeminate, by party spirit torn,
Such as she is in short, Leonidas
Would have her rather be. To guilt ascribed
Are Agis' purposes, because the bad
In Sparta o'er the good preponderate:
Those of Leonidas ascribed to virtue,
Because they are adapted to the times.
To-day, at least, remember, if thou canst,
That my son show'd himself the open foe
Of thy reign only, never of thyself;
Reflect that now thou wouldst not live, if he,
More citizen than king, had not preserved,
And p'rhaps to his own detriment, thy life.

Le. 'Tis true, that Agis, p'rhaps in spite of thee,
On that same day on which thy cruel brother

Sent vile assassins to destroy my life,
By other satellites, to him attach'd,
Preserved me living, and exempt from wounds:
But can a banish'd king, of throne bereft,
Bereft of honor and of innocence
By a fierce rival, his ill-granted life
Ascribe to gen'rous impulses of pity?

Ages. The gift was no less noble than imprudent:
Agis himself so deem'd it; but innate
Is magnanimity in that great heart.
The lofty Agis would not, with thy blood,
Contaminate the enterprise, at once
Unparallel'd and gen'rous, of a king,
Resolved spontaneously to reinstate
His people in a perfect liberty.
I ne'er dissuaded him from pardoning thee;
And maybe had attempted it in vain:
Mother of Agis, could I e'er evince
A heart less high than that of such a son?
'Tis true, I call Agesilaus brother;
But now of such a name he is unworthy.
With florid eloquence, and specious virtues,
Veiling his irreclaimable corruption,
Agis and Sparta, and with these myself,
He managed to deceive...

Le. But never me.

Ages. He was thy counterpart, and thence well known,—
To take for ever from both creditors
And debtors, from the rich and mendicants,
Such anti-Spartan names, Agesilaus,
More than all other men, persuaded Agis.
Seeing himself by our example forced
To sacrifice his riches, and subdued
By brutal avarice, disgracing thus
The Ephori's high function, he prevented
Sublime equality. And hence the people,
Confused, and more oppress'd, in doubt and fear
Betwixt their not extinguish'd servitude,
And their confounded, scarce-reviving freedom,
Recall'd thee to the throne: and chose in thee
A worthy instrument to prop once more

Their soft, incurably corrupted customs.
That very people, to thy hands gave bound
Cleómbrotus, erewhile elected king:
That very people, to the custody
Of an asylum only, relegates
Agis, their monarch once so idolized.

Am. Far more is he protected by the laws,
Than by this his asylum. Though he be
Destroyer and subverter of those laws,
Yet does he owe to them and us his safety.
To us, true Ephori, before all Sparta,
Will he be challenged to defend himself:
Provided he can prove his innocence,
He need not fear the monarch or his people.

Le. If in his heart he is not self-accused,
Whence this asylum? Why not summon me
To an impartial judgment at the just
And popular tribunal?

Ages. Because thou
Dost thy defence in arms and money find,
Whilst he finds his in naked virtue only:
Because thou dost return full of revenge,
Whilst he knows not its meaning: and, in short,
Because thy new, not Spartan, Ephori,
Other than legal terrors fulminate.
My Agis knows not fear; but he would snatch
Himself from infamy; which evermore
He who usurps authority, on others
Can, for a transient space at least, bestow.

Le. What will thy Agis do then? For he cannot
Now longer keep himself conceal'd, if he
Fear real infamy.

Am. Much less can Sparta,
In her existing strange vicissitudes,
Endure the loss of one of her two kings.
Agis still bears the name; yet he performs not
The necessary functions of a king:
Meanwhile within its ramparts, and without,
Sparta is insecure; its institutes
Are all despised; and there is need . . .

Ages. Of Agis;

And with him need of ev'ry thing that's good.
The enemies of Sparta know this truth
As well as we, in whose breasts Agis only
Revived a terror of our arms. Yes, Agis,
The beardless Agis, the Ætolians cow'd,
On whom the great Aratus, hoary leader,
Made no impression with his brave Achaians;
An ancient Spartan then he proved himself.—
I do conjure thee now, Leonidas,
To undertake no scheme for his destruction:
For e'en though fortune, often so unjust,
Should crown thy efforts now in the attempt,
From thence wouldst thou in course of time entail
Heavy disgrace and blame upon thyself,
And on thy country lasting detriment.
I know not whether country be to thee
A sacred name: but 'mongst ourselves it is
A name so strong, and paramount to all,
That if a fleeting doubt rose in my heart,
Whether the thoughts, much more the deeds of Agis,
Were all directed to the good of Sparta,
I, though his mother, I would first implore
Against my son, in all its plenitude,
The perfect rigor of the sacred laws.—
Act thou, then, now according to thy judgment:
Nor Agis, nor she who his mother is,
Save for their country and their countrymen,
Can ever tremble: thou, although in arms,
And in a prosp'rous state, within thy heart
Self-conscious, tremble for thyself alone.

Le. Madam, thou art a mother; of a man
Who once the sceptre held, thou art the mother;
Hence I excuse thee. Fear in you dwells not;
So say'st thou? May its absence be auspicious:
The Ephori, and Sparta, and myself
Give to you only one whole day to show
This innocence of yours, for ever vaunted,
And never proved. Let him at last come forth,
And make his own defence; and even me,
If so he will, let him accuse: his choice,
Except in reference to this asylum,

Is free in all things else. But say to him,
If he continue to conceal himself,
That Sparta by to-morrow's dawn no more
Will deem him king, and I no more a colleague.

Scene III.

AGESISTRATA, AMPHARES.

Am. He speaks embitter'd by his recent exile:
But Sparta doth not share in his resentment.—
Thou shouldest, thou, to whom alike are dear
Agis and Sparta, strive to bend thy son
To times like these, and thus induce him to...

Ages. To compromise his honor, neither I,
Nor ye, nor Sparta, ever could induce him.
That the king's wrath is not the wrath of Sparta,
The throng immense of Spartans in fresh troops,
Round his asylum ev'ry day assembled,
Sufficiently convince me, calling him,
With loud, audacious, and intrepid cries,
Preserver, sov'reign-citizen, and father,
Second deliverer, a new Lycurgus.
His virtue must indeed be eminent,
Since Sparta thus dares praise him at her peril;
Since admiration of that excellence
Greater effects in Sparta can produce,
Than all the terror of your arm'd adherents.

Am. The people gather into crowds, and shout;
Yet nothing they attempt: nor will their vile
And turbulent deportment aught effect,
Beyond exasperating more and more
The good against thy son. Thou canst do much,
Mother of Agis, with the Spartan people;
With Agis canst do more: the first induce
(Believe me this) to cease from turbulence;
The second, for a little time at least,
To fit himself to time and circumstance.
If thy son's good, and if the good of all
Thou dost desire, 'tis ill, thou know'st, ensured
By civil violence and rabid strife.

If thou refusest, in a cause like this,
Warmly to stir thyself, Leonidas,
And Sparta, and myself, will rightfully
Deem you the foes of Sparta; certain proof
Will then be gain'd that your vast wealth was given
With baseness to the common fund, to purchase
Supremacy, and not equality.
The fame of lofty efforts, good or bad,
On the event depends. Let not your deeds,
Magnanimous and gen'rous (if they are),
Receive a taint from other men's suspicions,
Which justly tax you with repentance now
For such a mighty gift; and further tax you
With a design large harvest thence to reap.
I, as a magistrate and citizen,
Not as a foe, lay ev'ry thing before thee:
With you alone the execution rests.

SCENE IV.

AGESISTRATA.

Ages.—Fain would these men gain time; but time shall not
Be granted to them. Ah, the suavity
Of Amphares, so subtly feign'd; the rage
Of fierce Leonidas, with pain repress'd,
Too manifestly indicate to me
The destiny of Agis and of Sparta.
Let nothing now be left untried to save them;
And if our country's angry gods with blood
Alone can be appeased, myself and Agis
Will for that country die; we're born to serve her.—
May Sparta from my blood arise once more!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

AGIS.

Agis. Ye pitying gods, who have till now been pleased
To rescue from Leonidas's wrath
My well-known innocence, no more can I
Remain within your temple. I from you
Sought an asylum, that my suff'ring country
Might not be forced to bear more violence,
More slaughter, and more broils: now are there those
Who dare ascribe this step to my misdeeds,
And to the terror of just punishment?
Behold, at once I this asylum leave.—
O Sparta, Sparta! . . . to thy true deliv'rers
Must thou be ever fatal? Ah, to me
Were but the fate allow'd that once befell
Thy first illustrious father! Not content
With everlasting exile, on himself
Inflicted by Lycurgus, I would choose
Further, ignoble death, if by that death
I might at least behold with thee revive
The pristine vigor of thy sacred laws! . . .
But who so quickly comes to this dark spot? . . .
Whom do I see? O Heav'ns! Agiziade? . . .
The daughter of Leonidas? Alas! . . .
My consort, who, although so well beloved,
Yet for her father's sake abandon'd me?

SCENE II.

AGIS, AGIZIADE.

Agi. What do I see! My Agis, hast thou ventured
From the asylum? Speedily I came
To find thee there . . .
Agis. Whate'er thou wert towards me,
My still belovèd consort, why dost thou
Thus bend thy steps to meet a wretched husband? . . .
Agi. Scarce can I speak; . . . O Agis; . . . I return

To thee, with thy embitter'd, alter'd fate:
Thy mournful state, and that alone, had power
To tear me from my father. On the day
That I was forced, my consort, to abandon
My children, and thyself, that I might not
Suffer my father, in his wretched exile,
To go from us a lonely fugitive,
I felt my heart as if asunder torn:
Nor wouldst thou ever have beheld me more,
I now confess to thee, in Sparta here,
If to the cruel shafts of adverse fortune
He had remain'd a mark. But once more he
Is raised on high, and thou art placed in danger:
Who, who could now dissever me from thee?
With all my heart do I to thee return:
And I conjure thee, by my love unfeign'd,
(For thine, I know not if I yet possess it;)
By those loved children once to thee so dear;
And further I conjure thee by thy country,
To which thou art so loftily devoted,
To grant at least a respite for the present
To thy new institutes. May love of peace,
The first of benefits, to this induce thee:
O, reassume the city's management
As 'twas aforetime, with Leonidas . . .

Agis. Lady, who could the fondness ever blame
Thou bear'st thy father? Thou canst never know him;
This is not thy prerogative: most good,
Most fond, most pious, most accomplish'd, thou,
In these corrupted times, a rare example
Of pristine conjugal and filial love,
Feel'st no solicitude except to be
The faithful partner of his destiny,
Whom adverse fortune persecutes the most.
If thou wert ever dear to me, to see thee
To-day return to me, when all men fly,
Makes thee to me more dear. From thy great heart
Less I expected not; I only fear'd
That, with his happiness intoxicate,
Leonidas perchance might interdict
Thy quitting him for me.

Agi. Just were thy fears.
Since Sparta as a conqueror received him,
Three days have pass'd; three days have also pass'd
That I have combated with him for thee.
Nor, since I could not his consent obtain,
Was I less firm, whate'er the risk might be,
To join thee here. Himself, at length compliant,
A little while ago to thee would send me
A messenger of peace: he, by my lips,
Now proffers it to thee without reserve;
He begs thee and conjures thee, that thou wilt,
Now quitting thy retreat, in concert with him,
Adopt all means whence Sparta may obtain
Henceforth complete indissoluble peace.

Agis. Doth he send thee to me? This change, so sudden,
Permits me to indulge no joyful hope.
What do I say? If in himself he hopes not,
Can Agis hope? What more remains for me
To fear, when my poor country ev'ry day
Is more enslaved? more distant from her pristine
Renown, and her transcendent many virtues?—
I had already of my own accord
Abandon'd my retreat: far other motives
Had now induced me to anticipate
The crafty wishes of Leonidas . . .
Ah! this will be a memorable day
To Sparta and to me; and may be fatal
To thee, if thou dost love me . . . I of this,
O my belovèd consort, cannot doubt . . .
But, if thou hearken'st to my honest words,
Do not thou, worthy of another father,
I do beseech thee, irritate in vain
His haughty soul. Live for our children's sake;
Against the fury of thy savage father,
Be thou to them a shield: those lofty thoughts,
Which I have ever shared with thee, and which
Thou feltest so profoundly, fortified
By other lofty ones in thee innate,
Which are the source sublime of filial love,
Do thou in them transfuse, that they may live

The glory of their father and of Sparta.
Thirsting for vengeance shall I not expire,
But Spartan virtues panting to restore;
Provided that they one day may arise,
Although in distant times, from sons of mine,
With this my spirit will be satisfied . . .

Agi. My heart thou rendest . . . Ah! . . . Why speak of death? . . .

Agis. Thou art a Spartan, and the wife of Agis;
Refrain from tears. My blood may serve my country;
My tears can serve thee not. Ah, dry thine eyes;
Compel me not to weep . . .

Agi. I know full well
The bitter agonies of thy sublime,
Devoted heart; thy upright, gen'rous schemes
Within my breast profoundly are engraved;
And if, in their complete accomplishment,
The full and utter ruin of my father
Were not involved, e'en at the risk of life,
Wouldst thou find me first ready to promote them . . .
How oft have I lamented o'er that father,
So different from thee! how oft have I
Wept that I was his daughter! Yet, alas!
I was indeed; and am . . . and 'twixt you two
I live distracted: and I ought to be
The means of amity betwixt you both,
Or ought to die.

Agis. If thou in other times,
From other blood hadst been in Sparta born,
Daughter of Sparta, mother of true Spartans,
Thou wouldst have been. Yet thy not Spartan father
I would not as a crime to thee impute.
Prompted by thy most gen'rous, lofty heart,
But not well disciplined, I heard thy lips
Pronounce thy father's and thy consort's names,
But not thy country's: yet, why should I wonder,
If thou art more a daughter and a wife,
Than citizen? Whate'er thou art, I love thee;
Nor any force, save that of my example,
To thy not Spartan feelings would I use.
Hence I conjure thee by our love, yea, more,

If it be needful, I command, that thou
Shouldst manifest to-day that thou art yet
E'en more a mother than a wife or daughter.—
But whence this dreadful tumult that approaches?
What crowd is this? what cries? O Heav'ns! my mother?
And a great multitude of people arm'd
Pursues her steps?

SCENE III.

AGIS, AGESISTRATA, AGIZIADE, PEOPLE.

Ages. My son, and what? hast thou
Left thy retreat? In whom dost thou confide?
In this base daughter of Leonidas?
Behold, I bring thee a more sure asylum;
These will at any moment be prepared . . .

Agis. O mother, thou shouldst better know thy Agis:
I in myself, or else in no one, trust.
She, whom thou call'st Leonidas's daughter,
Is lover, wife, and part of thine own son.—
Spartans, if ye indeed are such, whom now
I, at the risk of my renown, behold
Tumultuous and menacing in arms;
Spartans, now Agis speaks to you.—No arms
I, in my favor, ever will endure
Against my country; I seek no asylum;
Nor fear I any man. I well suffice
To prove to you my perfect innocence:
To make that innocence completely triumph
O'er other's malice, not with arms indeed,
But with more firm resolves, ye might yourselves
A just support one day have given to me:
But now, too late and vain, and (which is worse)
Illicit, would your interference be.

Ages. And wouldst thou then expose thyself unarm'd
To the base rage of a Leonidas?
To the bribed Ephori's perfidious snares?
Ah! I'll endure it not; nor these true sons
Of Sparta will endure it, who are all
Now ready for their king to yield their lives.

People. We all have come prepared to die for Agis.

Agis. Agis and Sparta heretofore were one;
Now are they thoroughly by fate disjoin'd;
Now that, perchance, 'tis indispensable
That Agis perish, to make Sparta safe.
Blood should be never spill'd; much less, when blood
Cannot regen'rate virtue. Ye could now
Not die for me, without the sacrifice
Of many others; and your own lives here,
And those of others equally, are all
Not yours, but the possession of your country.
There are, I know, in multitudes there are,
Misguided citizens: but, to restore them
To the straight path of duty, I prepare
A memorable and sublime example.
With this can I compel them to amendment:
With this make you with fervor more intense
The worshippers of self-renouncing virtue.
Agi. Unhappy I! thou makest me to tremble.
What dost thou plan? . . .
Ages. O woman, speak; for whom
Dost tremble now? thy husband or thy father?
Agis. Mother, thou know'st not how it wounds my heart,
To hear thee thus irreverently taunt
My faithful wife! She has this instant made
Herself, with her true filial piety,
More dear to me than ever yet she was.—
Mother, and wife, and people, hear me now.—
I have resolved within my inmost heart
To make the most malignant ones confess,
The most invidious, and the most depraved,
That I'm a real lover of my country.
A king, a father, and a citizen,
And nothing else, have I to Sparta been;
At least if I am not deceived: in others
P'rhaps I myself, with violence, inspired
At first some misconception of myself:
This choice of an asylum thence was not
To wisdom in me, but a guilty conscience,
And terrors of just punishment, ascribed.
Has Agis of a vulgar king incurr'd
The stain insufferable? But to-day,

Such as it is, my heart shall be reveal'd.
O welcome, yes, thrice welcome, is the danger
Which I must now encounter, to make clear
The good which I attempted to effect,
And, of those men who seek not for the good,
The wicked envy! For the public weal
Well knew I how, and dared, to be a king;
And for my private sake I also dare
Become once more a private citizen:
Not that I hope at present to convince
The countless disaffected; they in heart
Already are too much so; but I ought,
Before the presence of collected Sparta,
To cover them with shame and infamy.
I hope that they are willing to accuse me:
I rather with my actions, than with words,
Shall undertake to free myself from blame:
First would I unreservedly to Sparta
Promulgate my intentions, then submit . . .

People. Agis submit? No, never. All of us
Will make those traitors listen to thy words . . .

Agis. Not ye, O no! Truth, from my lips alone,
Shall make me by unwilling ears be heard.
And if my honor in your sight is dear;
If I have any thing from you deserved;
If there is aught in me; or if, at least,
Ye, from the recollection of my deeds,
For something hope, I supplicate, exhort,
Nay, I command you, to lay down your arms,
And to the Ephori, whate'er they be,
To render, with myself, submission due.
The king of Persia, when he finds that foes
Arise against himself within his realm,
Addresses them with his despotic sword:
But Sparta's monarch doth esteem himself
E'en to his enemies accountable;
At first he strives to baffle calumny
With arguments; but if in vain, he meets it
With the unchanging calmness of a king.—
I grieve, and shall eternally lament,
That that Leonidas, who thus assails me,

Unheard and exiled, from your city went.
Perchance his cause he could not have defended;
Perchance he would not have attempted it;
But for this purpose I should have allow'd him
Full means. Agesilaus force would use;
My opposition ineffectual proved;
All know not this: and hence Agesilaus
And I are not distinguish'd from each other.
I from that day discover'd, though too late,
That he was only a dissembling Spartan:
But time press'd on me, and the lofty wish
To do the good, for which the banishment
Of fierce Leonidas (its chiefest hindrance)
Seem'd to prepare the way. His exile, hence,
Just, but inflicted in an unjust manner,
I tolerated for the good of Sparta.

People. And who knows not that thou didst save his life? . . .

Agi. Yes, by his means alone my father yet
Enjoys the breath of life. Myself beheld
The cruel danger which surrounded him;
The minions of Agesilaus now
Had almost in their snares entangled him,
When opportunely Agis' partisans
Dispersed them, and deliver'd us unhurt.

Ages. Leonidas to-day would hence repay him,
By wresting from him not his life alone,
But his fame also . . .

Agis. To effect this purpose
The tyrant has no pow'r: on me alone,
And on my deeds, my fame depends.

Ages. The firm
And persevering project to oppress thee,
The jealousy of others, from thy deeds
Solely arise. But, Amphares comes hither?
The worthy friend and colleague of the tyrant . . .

Agis. Let him be heard.

Agi. O Heav'ns! for thee I tremble . . .

Scene IV.

AGIS, AGESISTRATA, AGIZIADE, AMPHARES, PEOPLE.

Am. Far from thy refuge, Agis, in the midst
Of such a throng, I did not think to find thee.
But yet, more grateful witnesses than these
I could not wish to meet. I hither come
The will of Sparta to unfold to thee.
Agis. It is? . . .
Am. Pacific.
Agis. How?
Am. It breathes true peace:
If peace be not too adverse to thy views;
Or if at once security and greatness
Thou dost not seek in turbulence and discord.
Agis. I ought not now to clear myself to thee:
Perchance to those to whom I owe the homage,
Shall I acquit myself of this. Meanwhile,
Let's hear the peace Leonidas proposes.
Am. Am I the monarch's messenger? I am
A Spartan Ephorus; in Sparta's name
Do I address thee. If thou now consent
To yield submission to the citizens,
(The true and wise ones,) and restore once more
Peace to the city, each new law of thine
Thyself condemning; Sparta, by my lips,
To-day restores to thee the royal seat,
Which thou hast abdicated by thy flight.
Ages. Agis . . .
Agis. I am thy son, O mother; now
On me rely.—Thou, who in Sparta's name,
So that I make myself unworthy of it,
Offer'st to me the throne; I pray thee, take
This answer to Leonidas, that I
Would speak with him, ere to collected Sparta
I solemnly and finally appeal.
Agi. I do beseech thee, to my father go,
O Amphares, and urge him to compliance:
Make him remember that he would not now
Be living, had it not for Agis been;

That he to Agis as a consort gave
His much-loved only daughter . . .
Agis. Nothing else
Make him remember, than that we are both
The citizens of Sparta; and that now
The interest of all obliges him
To grant me audience.
Am. It is most uncertain
Whether he can or will confer with thee,
Till he has learn'd if his proposed conditions
Are by thyself rejected or embraced.
Agis. He can, on no account whate'er, nor will he,
Refuse to hear me. I, from henceforth, quit
For ever my asylum; round my person
No train will I permit.—To you, O Spartans,
Do I in clear, decided tones exclaim:
Here, undefended, innocent, alone,
Will I remain.—[1] See, Amphares, behold;
The time, the place, the circumstance, all now
Will be most opportune. Ere it be long,
I to this forum will return; and here
I trust the king will not disdain to come.
I shall be here alone; but let him have
His satellites beside him: we shall be
By all the citizens of Sparta seen,
But shall not be by any of them heard.
Am. Since thou wilt have it so, I quickly fly
To bear the tidings to Leonidas.

Scene V.

AGIS, AGESISTRATA, AGIZIADE.

Agis. Well did I know with what a bait to lure him.—
Now, ladies, to my dwelling and my children
Let me return with you. I shall enjoy
A few brief, final moments, in your presence,
Of private consolation, till I join
This fatal conference.
Agi. O Heav'ns! . . .

[1] The people here retire, and disperse.

Ages. O son,
What canst thou hope from this perfidious king?
Agis. He grasps the fate of Sparta; and canst thou,
O mother, ask what Agis hopes from him?

ACT III.

SCENE I.

AGIS.

Agis. Leonidas yet comes not: he perchance
Disdains the challenge? no, he dare not: shame,
If nothing else, should bring him here. Erewhile
The people heard the gen'rous invitation,
That I, by Amphares, dispatch'd to him:
Many considerations yet restrain him,
Many and potent; much timidity,
Though he be victor, lurks within his heart.
Ah, could I, could I, by his fears promote
The interests of Sparta! . . . But at length
He comes: O! does he thus appropriate
A regal train? It suits him. Let me meet him.

SCENE II.

AGIS, LEONIDAS, SOLDIERS.

Agis. O king, before another task begins,
Thou com'st to hear me? . . .
Le. Yes, I come to hear thee . . .
Agis. Then, I demand to speak to thee alone . . .
Le. Withdraw.[1]—I am alone: I listen to thee.
Agis. I speak not to thee as thy son-in-law;
Though I beyond all words adore a consort,
Who is a very paragon of daughters.
Le. She was, 'tis true, a pow'rful tie betwixt us,
Ere thou from Sparta drov'st me into exile.
Agis. I know it; nor should I now mention it,

[1] The soldiers retire.

Since I refrain'd from speaking of it then.
Not that I then forgot it, this thou knowest;
But thoughts of Sparta then my speech inspired,
Whose bidding silenced, and still silences,
In me all other impulses.—Thou, king
Of Sparta, art my foe: but, if thou art
No foe of Sparta, I to-day demand
From the great gods, protectors of my country,
And hope to gain, an eloquence so strong,
So true, and lofty, that thou mayst by me
The prompt and certain method now be taught,
Whence to obtain, perchance beyond thy wishes . . .

Le. Beyond my wishes? Know'st thou what I wish?

Agis. Vengeance on me, before all other things
Thou wishest, and shalt have it; I to thee
Will give it thoroughly. Thy second wish
Is lasting pow'r; and I will point to thee
Its certain source. Nor satisfied with this,
A method, lofty and infallible,
I offer to thee, whence thou mayst obtain
Another thing, to which perchance thy thoughts
Have never turn'd: and it is such, that thou
(Provided it be easy to acquire)
Canst not despise it. Permanent, immense,
This will I gain thee yet . . .

Le. And it is? . . .

Agis. Fame.—

Le. — Thou'rt better fitted to prevent, than give it.—
With me the throne thou filledst; never then
Didst thou concur with me for Sparta's good,
Or for our common glory: thou alone
Thought'st of thy private weal, and how to make
Thyself a name upon the wreck of mine.
Hence Sparta to extremity, and me
To exile, thou didst goad. I do not mean
To take revenge for this; I ought, indeed,
To take it now for lacerated Sparta;
But a true love of peace forbids me this:
Peace, which thy colleagues in iniquity,
(Although in vain,) are ready to disturb.
The love of peace, in short, induces me

To offer to thee now, in Sparta's name,
Pardon complete . . .
Agis. Complete? It is too much.—
Come, no one hears us here; what boots deceit?
Thou thinkest that I do not read thy heart;
Thou canst not make me think that thou hast changed it.
I think, however, that to take from me
Both pow'r and sceptre, would not now suffice
To make thee fully on the throne secure.
Thou knowest well that, while I live, thou canst not
Create another king as thy liege colleague:
But neither dar'st thou at the same time slay me,
Because thou'rt well aware that in the hearts
Of many still I reign. Behold thy true,
And most-conceal'd reflections: now hear mine.—
In the asylum I inclosed myself
Against my will; spontaneously I quit it;
And force to force, if I were so inclined,
I might oppose: art to oppose to art,
I neither have the skill, nor will to do it.
That to defend my cause, I will not spill
A drop of Spartan blood, thou shouldest now
Be well convinced. Thou see'st me now alone;
I in thy pow'r am placed; behold me now
A suppliant for my country: I am ready
To yield to thee for her not life alone,
But also fame.
Le. Hast thou this fame of thine
Unspotted, which thou dar'st to offer me?
Agis. Unspotted, yes, throughout; of Agis worthy;
And too illustrious for thy envious eyes.—
Me thou abhorrest; Sparta I adore:
Now hear how thou at once mayst gratify
Thy hatred and my love. I undertook,
By equalizing all the citizens,
In Sparta to revive true liberty,
Greatness, and virtue. With the most depraved,
Thou never ceasedst to oppose my plans,
Although in vain; and not that thou in these
Didst never see the common benefit,
Immense and unalloy'd; not that pure truth,

With her divine resplendence, did not find,
Although without inflaming it, a passage
To thy resisting heart: but in that heart,
The love of gold, and arbitrary power,
Wither'd at once all patriotic thoughts,
Baffled the cry of truth, the vital warmth
Of virtue. The true public Spartan voice
Removed thee from thy throne, proclaiming thee
The foe of Sparta: nor didst thou e'en try
To meet the insupportable reproach.
In exile afterwards, proscribed, and wand'ring,
Thou mightst have been (thou knowest) vilely slain;
I hinder'd it: nor do I now say this
To thee upbraidingly; but to afford
No dubious evidence, that not thy ruin,
But lofty Spartan actions were indeed
Alone the object of my lofty schemes.

Le. And of a fatal inadvertency
Must thou reproach thyself in saving me.

Agis. And thou wilt make for this, by slaying me,
Ample atonement. Only do thou learn
Of me the means for this.—To liberty,
More than to tyranny, inclineth Sparta:
Of this be thou assured, though for the present
Thou hast imposed on her a king's harsh yoke.
A transient indignation of the many
Against the infamous Agesilaus,
Hath now replaced thee on the throne, and driven
Him from the Ephori: there are who now
Deem me a partner in his crimes, and not
Without some cause, while I continue silent.
Do not thou goad me on to clear myself
Of such reproach effectually; 'twould be
Easy to show them, that Agesilaus
Betray'd at once both Sparta and myself:
If I make this to all men clear, then thou
Canst not, without much damage to thyself,
Use violence tow'rds me.

Le. Thou thinkest so?

Agis. Thou knowest it. But, do not fear. I wish'd
To be the Spartan monarch of true Spartans;

Thee I leave king of these. No force of thine
Avails to make me guilty: I will, I,
Make myself culpable before all Sparta;
Will yield thee the entire ascendency
Over myself; will make thee truly great
Against thy will, provided thou aspire
To greatness.

Le. Thou in vain insultest me . . .

Agis. Do thou thyself, yes now, accomplish that
For Sparta, and her glory's sake, which I
Audaciously attempted. From the throne
Do thou once more promulgate, not my laws,
But the free, sacred, lofty, manly laws
Of great Lycurgus: banish poverty
At once with wealth; she is the child of wealth:
Resign thy riches: equalize the people:
Become thyself a Spartan, and at once
Spartans create: . . . This purposed I to do;
Do thou accomplish it, and snatch from me
The lasting glory of the enterprise.—
If thou wilt swear now to accomplish this,
Thou before Sparta as a criminal
Mayst hurry me; and say I made a plea
Of public good to screen my private views;
And say, that though my purposes were guilty,
My laws were not so. Thou shalt add to this,
That thou thyself, with a more upright mind,
And greater singleness of heart, once more
The glory of thy city wilt renew.
Then in the presence of collected Sparta
Will I confess myself deserving death;
Will I confess that the enormities
And wrongs Agesilaus dared commit,
From me derived their origin; that I
In him a harbinger of tyranny
Dared to create; that I, by his means, sought
To make a trial of the Spartan baseness.
This doubtless will suffice. Death, which thou canst not,
Except by treach'ry, now inflict on me,
(Thou seeest,) from my fellow-citizens
Thou wilt obtain it thus, and it will seem
To them most just. I thus divest myself

Of that same fame which thou canst not take from me,
Which gives thee umbrage, and to thee resign it.
I die, thou reignest; both will be content:
The throne will not invalidate thy fame;
Though to the tomb I carry infamy,
My only hope I leave behind; that Sparta
Will rise again to renovated life.
Le. —Dost deem me so corrupt?
Agis. I deem thee great;
Since I account thee fit to consummate
My mighty projects . . .
Le. Shall I lend a hand
To thy pernicious, thy flagitious schemes? . . .
Agis. Thou wilt be utterly from envy freed,
When I am dead: and thou mayst then fulfil,
To thy advantage, and to that of Sparta,
My mighty purposes. O, do thou dare
To seem thyself exalted in my greatness:
Envious wert thou; now, do thou wholly hide
Thy former native baseness with my blood.
Lift up thy soul to an unhoped-for greatness,
And make thyself the equal of thy throne.
Le. The acclamation of the citizens
Already has enough exalted me
Above thyself; but pardoning thee, if this
Sparta concede to me, will give me yet
Fuller ascendency o'er thee. Meanwhile
Let me present thee now, for needs I must,
To Sparta.—Hast thou aught else to impart?
Agis. This only, that thou know'st not how to be
Vicious, nor know'st how to dissemble virtue.
Le. Now that thou hast imparted all thy thoughts,
Ere the asylum once more rescue thee
From Sparta's reach, I think myself constrain'd
To drag thee to a prison.—Guards, advance . . .
Agis. I in a prison safer feel myself,
Than thou upon a throne. By Sparta, we
Shall both be heard; nor face to face canst thou
Before me stand.—Thou ruinest thyself
If thou in prison kill me; this thou knowest.
O think, and think again; to save thyself,

And murder me, no means to thee remain,
Save those which heretofore I pointed out.

Scene III.

LEONIDAS.

Le. At last I hold him. Many obstacles,
'Tis true, and mighty dangers, I confront:
Yet will I, yes, though even at the risk
Of my own detriment, yet will I slay
This haughty importuning demagogue.
But by his death I shall accomplish nothing,
If first I do not rob him of his fame:
This can alone perpetuate my sway.—
Alas! I feel it e'en to agony!
Nor can I give it utt'rance; when he speaks,
A permeating ray of genuine truth
Illumes my breast, and almost conquers me...
Ah, no! it tears and maddens my vex'd heart,
That insupportable and stern parade
Of hated virtue. Let him die; yes, perish;...
E'en if, in killing him, I die myself.

Scene IV.

AGIZIADE, LEONIDAS, AGESISTRATA.

Agi. Father, is't true?... by treach'rous wiles... O
Heav'ns!
Hast thou to soldiers' hands my spouse?...
Ages. Is this
Thy promised faith, Leonidas?
Le. What faith?
What have I promised? I have pledged my faith
To Sparta, but to Agis never.
Agi. Ah!
Belovèd father, to thy daughter grant,...
Alas!...
Ages. Spontaneously did he not quit
Yonder asylum? Did he not come forth,
Alone, unarm'd, and of his own accord,
To treat with thee of peace? And thou, meanwhile,
Dost instigate thy parasites to drag him

Within a prison? violating thus
The honor of a king, and, more than this,
The will express of Sparta?... Infamous...
Le. O women, to divert me from my will,
Tears and reproaches equally are vain.
I am the first of Sparta's magistrates,
And not her tyrant; no. Be Agis guilty,
The Ephori and Sparta should condemn him;
If innocent, to his suspended rank
The Ephori and Sparta should restore him.
Ne'er would it have been possible to prove him
Guilty or innocent, if he persisted
To seek the interference of the people,
Or an asylum in the temple's walls.
'Tis time, high time, that Sparta should be freed
From the distraction of suspense, produced
By knowing not, if she doth, as she ought,
Possess two monarchs, or if one is wanting.
Agi. Ah, father!... Agis rescues thee from death,
And thou that Agis draggest to a prison?
On him hast thou bestow'd thy daughter's hand,
And yet wouldst rob him of his fame? Though guilty,
(Which he is not,) thou shouldest be the first
To interpose in his behalf. I gave
To thee no doubtful evidence of love,
In thy adversity: and now from Agis
Nothing, in his adversity, can tear me:
To doom thy daughter with thy son-in-law
To chains, or to release him from those chains,
Art thou constrain'd: nor menaces, nor prayers,
Shall e'er persuade me to abandon him.
Nor canst thou wreak a vengeance on his head,
Which shall not equally rebound on me:
Thou, thou must shed that very daughter's blood,
Who, thee to follow in thy banishment,
Her husband, and her children, and her throne,
And her belovèd country, sacrificed.
Ages. O thou indeed not his, but my true daughter!...
Thou Spartan wife and daughter, thou in vain
Appealest to a father not a Spartan.—
Base envy, and still baser thirst of vengeance,

Close both his heart and lips.—What couldst thou say?...
Thou, O Leonidas, within thy heart
Hast sworn the utter overthrow of Agis,
I know thou hast; and equally I know
All, all thy impious stratagems. But yet,
If thou on both of us shouldst death inflict,
(For my existence and my son's are one,)
In vain thou hopest to destroy our fame.
Thine own by this means... but, what do I say?
Art thou possess'd of fame?—No other object
Did thy heart e'er propose, than to preserve
And to augment thy riches by the throne.
Thou in Seleucus' court becam'st at once
Accomplish'd in the art of avarice,
And that of wasting blood. A Persian thou,
Reignest in Sparta; hence thou dost abhor
Equality in citizens, from whence
New virtues soon would rise; whence thou once more
Wouldst be for ever from the throne expell'd:
Nor dare thy heart aspire beyond that throne.

Le. Nor thy reproaches can exasperate,
Nor thy just sorrows mollify my soul.
Sparta, and not myself, impeaches Agis,
And summons him to justify his deeds.
Tow'rds him no other force will I adopt,
(Nor could I, if I would,) except to take
From him all means by which he would evade
Just punishment...

Ages. Just?—Tell me, wouldst thou dare
To all assembled Sparta, in this forum,
Here to present him, from the terror free
Of thy arm'd satellites?

Le. I know not yet
The judgment of the Ephori; but...

Ages. Thine
Is too well known to me! Let Agis be
Brought to the presence of collected Sparta,
Not of the mercenary Ephori;
Or to his presence Sparta will repair.
I promise this, although a feeble woman,
If thou destroy me not before my son.

SCENE V.

LEONIDAS, AGIZIADE.

Agi. I will not, father, from thy side depart;
Nor will I cease to kneel before thy feet,
Nor to embrace thy knees, till thou once more
Restore to me my husband; or till thou
With thy own hand join me with him in death.
Le. Belovèd daughter, rise; O never more
Do thou depart from me; I wish nought else.
Thou hast with me magnanimously shared
The many outrages of adverse fate;
Hence is it just, that thou a partner be
Of my prosperity: no one shall ever
Have o'er my heart more influence than thou:
Thee, as my representative, I make
The arbitress of Sparta: nor without thee . . .
Agi. What words are these? 'Tis Agis I demand;
Agis, and nought besides. Thou gav'st him to me;
And thou canst never take him from me, no,
If thou take not my life; thou never canst
From Sparta take him, without dreadful stain,
As unjust king, unnatural fierce man.
Le. How canst thou thus be wilfully deceived?
Dost thou not see that Agis guilty is?
But grant that he is guiltless; thou know'st well,
In either case, he is not in my power.
The Ephori must hear him, and must judge him:
Nor, for his detriment, or his advantage,
Can I, unaided, any thing perform.
Agi. Thou art a father; and thou lovest me;
Thou hast already seen my filial love
Brought to a cruel test; and can it be
That thou wouldst now dissemble with thy daughter?—
By treach'rous arts erewhile hadst thou the power
Unaided, to immure him in a prison,
And, being innocent, canst thou not save him?
Ah, force me not to think thee . . .
Le. What avails it?
In this I can do nothing: furthermore,
'Tis needful that without delay I give

The Ephori, not only an account
Of my own actions, but of those of Agis.
Agi. Ah, no! I will not quit thee: nor canst thou
A cruel order give, that will not fall,
At least in part, upon thy daughter . . .
Le. Cease;
Return thou to my palace . . .
Agi. I go with thee.
All wilt thou do, all oughtest thou to do,
O father, for thy guiltless son-in-law
Who saved thy life . . . Ah, no! thou canst not slay him,
If first thou wilt not murder thy own daughter.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Threshold of the Spartan Prison.

LEONIDAS, AMPHARES. *The People, who from time to time introduce themselves.*

Am. Full late thou comest; and the time is pressing.
Le. Place this delay to my account as father:
I was erewhile compell'd my daughter's footsteps
E'en to the palace to accompany.
With such an agony of grief she wept
For Agis, that I found it difficult
To tear her from my side. Her wretchedness
Hath made no slight impression on my heart.
Am. What? Art thou troubled? Art thou overwhelm'd?
Perchance thou carest for thy daughter more
Than for thy vengeance?
Le. Agis I abhor
Far more intensely than I love the throne:
But yet, my daughter's words and lamentations
Afflict my heart.—Now let me think of action:
Are all things by thy vigilance disposed?
Am. Dost thou not see? Upon this spacious threshold
Of Sparta's prison, it appear'd to me

Our seats might fitly be arranged; the place,
Less ample than the forum, will contain
Less of the dregs of Sparta: but, however,
As many here may introduce themselves,
As the fulfilment of our plans require.
Men at the entrance stand as sentinels,
Large numbers of our partisans admitting.—
Behold; the place already is half fill'd;
Nor are there scarcely any of our foes.
As yet the tidings are not fully spread
Of the great trial: and I hope that all
Will be accomplish'd ere the daring mother
Comes to disturb it with her headstrong train.

Le. But, art thou sure that from such promptitude
Danger may not result?

Am. No trifling force,
Besides our dignity, our cause supports.
There will be need of special circumspection
In setting forth the charges; we must seem
Just to our friends themselves, and of their good,
More than our own, tenacious advocates.
Some tumult may arise; to frustrate this,
Provision is already made. For us,
It will suffice that Agis from these walls
No more departs alive. To counteract
The first audacious movements of the people,
Our friends among the citizens, thy soldiers,
The name of us the Ephori, and, lastly,
Thy own audacity, may well suffice.
Time is meanwhile ensured; and we shall have
From time entire success . . .

Le. Behold the senate;
Behold the Ephori: the populace
In numbers follow them, and they appear
Not turbulent in aspect; nay, they seem
Pleased to be present at the accusation
Of a subverting monarch. Courage, courage.
While with insinuating flatteries,
And opportune, their fancies I allure,
Do thou the prison enter, and ere long
Agis, well guarded, to our presence bring.

Scene II.

LEONIDAS, PEOPLE, EPHORI, SENATORS: *each one placed according to his rank.*

Le. —Praise to the gods! I see collected here
The real citizens; and not confused
With the audacious, turbid, abject people,
Who, with their numbers, strive to implicate
You in their errors, spite of your consent.—
A spectacle unprecedented, now
Attracts the eyes of universal Sparta;
The most important that can ever be
By a free man beheld: a king of yours,
Charged by your Ephori, and then before you
Accused. His accusation ye will hear,
His pleading, and the final judgment given,
In which yourselves, I hope, will bear a part.
I, though a king, with joy announce it to you.
Ah! I had not such fate on that dire day,
Fatal to mé, to Sparta not propitious,
In which, an exile, from my throne degraded,
Forlorn I wander'd, doubtful of my life.
To guilty violence I then succumb'd,
Unheard and unaccused; yet, more dismay,
Than from my unjust banishment, my heart
Endured from the subversion of the laws,
And the dread peril Sparta then incurr'd.
At last, convinced yourselves of your misfortunes,
Once more ye seated me upon the throne,
And, at the same time, Sparta's laws restored:
Agesilaus, and Cleómbrotus,
And the bribed Ephori, their partisans,
Inimical to Sparta, ye proscribed.
Agis remains: there are who think him guiltless;
And p'rhaps he is so. But, meanwhile, I wish'd
His person to secure, and only hold him,
That he may clear himself before your eyes.
If he were once convicted of offence,
Ye should first hear me for my son-in-law
Pardon implore: his inexperienced youth
Must, in your judgment, as it does in mine,

Make him appear not undeserving pity.—
Ephori, senators, and citizens,
Your genuine majesty has never soar'd
To exercise a nobler right than this:
To-day to ascertain your monarch's faults,
And pardon them: for I indeed to-day
Submit to your inspection all my deeds.
It seems to me that this is no light proof
Of my pure heart and equitable rule;
And to afford to you that proof I pant.
Let Agis by Leonidas be taught
To tremble at the laws.—But see, already
Agis presents himself at your tribunal:
Behold I sit in silence; I await,
Myself a citizen, from fellow-citizens
The termination of this lofty process.
With all my pow'rs I swear to countenance,
Whate'er it be, your free, unanimous,
Your sacred, and immutable decision.

Scene III.

AMPHARES, AGIS *amidst* GUARDS, LEONIDAS, PEOPLE, EPHORI, SENATORS.

Am. Ephori, Spartans, king, he whom I drag
Before the true tribunal of my country,
Is Agis of Eudamidas. Erewhile
He, with Leonidas, o'er Sparta reign'd;
Him afterwards he banish'd from the throne,
And a new colleague to himself assumed,
Cleómbrotus. It pleased you presently
To reinstate Leonidas, who thence
Resumed the sceptre from Cleómbrotus.
Then to the sacred bounds of the asylum
This Agis fled: and why, himself will tell you.
While there immured, no longer was he king;
The throne he had abandon'd: yet not thence
Became he private; he had not laid down
His dignity, nor was it taken from him:
Not guiltless, since he fled to an asylum;
Not guilty, since he never was accused.

The gods of Sparta have deliver'd him
To you to-day, although by none of us
Has his asylum violated been.
Hence I accuse him now, before you all,
Of changed, betray'd, and violated laws;
Of stratagems despotically used
Against Leonidas, and the' Ephori;
Of arbitrary views, as instruments
To whose success the bribed rebellious dregs
Of Spartan profligates he strove to gain:
And, lastly, to concentrate in one charge
All his offences, I accuse him to you
Of having violated and betray'd
The delegated majesty of Sparta.

Agis. —Truly a solemn and imposing pomp
Is this: but why, on such a grave occasion,
Is not collected Sparta here convened?
Why, as is always done with the accused,
Am I not to the forum led?—'Tis true,
I see the Ephori, a king is here,
And I behold a shadow of the senate:
But yet, as far as I can cast my eyes,
I see no citizens, except a few,
Pow'rful, and mingled with arm'd satellites.
The majesty of universal Sparta
May this indeed be deem'd? I, not alone
Would have all Sparta, but all Greece to hear
Your accusations and my answer to them.
Now, since within your bosoms there does dwell
Such absolute conviction of my guilt,
Say: wherefore is it that ye wrest from me,
With such a great proportion of my hearers,
At the same time such great part of my shame?

Le. Far as the place permits, thou seeest, Agis,
A multitude of citizens assembled.
To bring thee from the confines of thy prison
Would implicate too much, as thou know'st well,
The Ephori's stern dignity; too much,
If thou art innocent, thy innocence.
Sparta heard thee, defending thy retreat,
Erewhile adduce, that thus thou wouldst remove

All pretext of disturbance, all pretence
For sanguinary measures, from the people:
Wouldst thou amidst that people's violence,
And turbulent vociferation, go,
A quiet and free judgment to obtain?
Agis. A quiet judgment, and for you the safest,
Would it have been at once to have dispatch'd
The executioner to where I'm prison'd:
But far less quiet will this process prove
Than ye expect. Fear does not prompt my words;
No; of my destiny already sure,
The forum and this place to me are one.
I, without hearing it, my sentence know:
But I indeed shall never thence receive
A deeper injury, than that which I
Long in my heart have fix'd to have from you.—
Judges, spectators, whosoe'er ye be:
I now forewarn you all, that I, condemn'd,
And slain, within these walls, shall not by death,
As fain I would do, peace restore to you:
Nor ye, by dragging me to death, for this
Remain in safety.—I await my doom
Undaunted. Be the accusations heard . . .
Am. I, on the Ephori's behalf, address thee now;
Listen to me.—Didst thou not, Agis, drive,
Unheard by thee, Leonidas to exile?
Agis. He, to the seat of judgment duly summon'd,
Chose rather to escape.
Le. I summon'd was,
I cannot contradict, but to confront
A savage and tumultuous populace.
Could that be judgment? . . .
Agis. Quite as much as this,
At least. To thee was flight allow'd: and so
Thou never wert imprison'd. Heretofore
Means of escape solicited my choice;
But to the prison willingly I went,
And willingly in judgment I appear:
Whate'er that judgment is, I fear it not.
I wish'd it, and exult in its conclusion;
And I exult in making myself heard.

Am. Didst thou not violate thy country's laws?
Agis. The sacred institutes of great Lycurgus,
In their primeval purity, I wish'd
To re-establish: they were ne'er repeal'd,
But for a long time had been unobserved.
To such a just and generous design
Leonidas was hostile: first by art,
And then by force he thwarted my designs;
But both were ineffectual: thus subdued
More by his own shame than the force of others,
He, as the lesser evil, on himself
Exile imposed. Let him himself confess,
If injury to me he can impute,
Or life and safety. Sparta with one voice,
At his departure, all his actions blamed,
All mine applauded. Greedy creditors
Were then abolish'd; wealth was equalized;
With luxury, the vices in her train,
And torpid indolence, from Sparta fled:
In short, primeval liberty and virtue
At once resumed their sway. Dare any here
Deny what I assert?—Of my short reign,
After the flight of your Leonidas,
Behold the crimes.
Am. Dar'st thou perchance deny,
That, by the bait of such professions caught,
A speedy desolation overwhelm'd
The cheated citizens? The fields, though promised,
Divided not; the rich made poor; both crush'd;
Wilt thou deny, too, that, to laws transgress'd,
Such as thou deemest ours to be, succeeded
The cruel tyranny of self alone?
A tyranny the viler, since it made
The laws to serve as its mendacious veil.
Agis. Whilst I for your sakes for the camp left Sparta,
Whilst to the arm'd Etolians I display'd,
To their dismay, regen'rate Spartans arm'd;
One of the Ephori, become a tyrant,
Agesilaus, here in Sparta dared
For wicked purposes to use his power.
Am I responsible for his misdeeds?

I willingly accept their punishment;
Provided that my country reap the fruit
Of my imperfect virtues: virtues which
Ye cannot controvert, though full of malice.—
The restoration of Lycurgus' laws
Has not offended you: (in this alone
I dared to innovate) but the harsh deeds
Agesilaus wrought. What then remains,
But to kill me, and to pursue my plans?
Am. Say'st thou Agesilaus urged thee, then,
To ruin Sparta?
Agis. To regen'rate Sparta
I of my own accord address'd myself,
Because I am a Spartan.
Am. Say: dost thou
For a true king Leonidas acknowledge?
Agis. Leonidas, a Spartan, I acknowledge,
Who in Thermopylæ, for Sparta's sake,
Fell, with three hundred Spartans.
Am. Answer'st thou
In such a manner? Dost thou thus contemn
The Ephori's, the senate's majesty?
Agis. In answ'ring thus, I venerate and worship
The majesty of Sparta.
Am. Guilty then
Thou dost confess thyself?
Agis. Deem'st thou me guilty,
Thou who accusest me?—Let us conclude,
Let us conclude all this dissembling juggling.
Thou dost accuse me; I refute the charges.
I hither came to prove to those that hate me,
That I, a citizen and king, as far
As is consistent with the conscious pride
Of innocence, spontaneously submitted
E'en to the malversation of the laws.—
Now here, whoe'er ye be, hear my last words.
Am. What more is there to hear?
Agis. Much; but express'd
In a few words.
Am. Thou ouhgtest not to speak . . .
Agis. What! thou an Ephorus, dost thou not know

The laws, or not remember them? Accused ones
Address themselves to Sparta, if they wish.
Then listen to me, thou, and hold thy peace.—
And ye, O Spartans, hear.—Of many things
Ye're not inform'd at all, or misinform'd:
Amphares' cries, Agesilaus' deeds,
The arts of your Leonidas, my silence,
Have all by turns deceived you. We are all
Now come to such a pitch, that to set free
Each one from error, it is requisite
That Agis perish. I, with my own hand,
Already on myself might have bestow'd
An independent and becoming death;
But this escape from life had render'd me
Guilty in your esteem. I was, and am,
Fully persuaded in my inmost heart,
That from the sentence, be it what it may,
Beneath whose weight I fall, no infamy
Can ever on my reputation rest.
Thence hither to permit myself to be
Before my foes dragg'd living, was my choice,
And here I stand. That death I do not fear,
Ye shall yourselves behold: I might to you,
If so I would, yet dearly sell my life.
The fearful cries of the indignant people
Will quickly make this known to you: in short,
That I esteem at a far higher rate
My country than myself, soon will my death
Convince you.—I exhort, nay, I conjure you,
Sparta's redemption and your own to win
From my atoning blood. The lands, the wealth,
That now infatuate your understanding,
Lodged in the hands of few, harm equally
Those who possess, and those who have them not;
Those lands, that wealth, since ye would not divide them
With your own fellow-citizens, from you
Will be, and shortly, wrested by your foes.
The people, deem'd so vile, because so poor;
The Spartan people, hating you, ye rich,
Ye who are stronger even than the laws,
Is numerous; and ever goaded on

By fierce necessity. This very people
May constitute at once the Spartan splendor,
And your salvation, if ye will reflect
That they, as well as you, are citizens
Of Sparta, and the children of Lycurgus.
If otherwise, they will annihilate
Sparta, themselves, and you. Now is the time,
Trust to my words, mature for such a change:
Heav'n does not will that I should witness it;
But it decrees its advent: Agis' blood
Is indispensable to hasten it,
And Agis yields that blood. I pity feel
For you, not for myself: these are the words
Of one whose only object is to die,
And to the tomb conveys no other wish,
Except to save his country. Far beyond
The reach of malice is the name of Agis:
It is not needful now, to make me great,
That others give effect to my designs;
Rather, it lessens my renown in part,
That others should succeed where I have fail'd.
Be then my death your wrath's last ebullition;
Be the first fruit of your exhausted malice
The restoration of your olden virtue,
The re-establishment of the divine
And lofty institutions of Lycurgus,
And a sublime and Spartan emulation
For freedom, arms, and patriotic love.

People. Great is the soul of Agis: we have been,
Perchance, deceived . . .

Am. Yes, ye are now deceived
By these seditious words . . .

Agis. Ye Ephori,
What now remains for you to say, I know.—
I, of a royal citizen, at length,
The latest functions fully have accomplish'd.
I to my prison go, from whence henceforth
Nought but the name of Agis shall escape.

Scene IV.

LEONIDAS, AMPHARES, PEOPLE, EPHORI, SENATORS.

People. He speaks not as a culprit: he excites
Involuntary wonder and compassion.
Le. 'Tis true, O Spartans: by Agesilaus
He was seduced; his crime appears to be
Worthy of pardon. I myself from you
Entreat it for my son-in-law; for him
Who rescued me from death . . .
Am. Leonidas,
Before the senate and the Ephori
Thou standest now: and these thou shouldst address.
Thy private arguments from public guilt
Wrest not the penalty; nor pardon ever
Precedes conviction.
Le. I will never hear,
Much less myself pronounce, his punishment.
I will not, no, though he deserves to die,
Ever participate in Agis' death.
From his retreat to drag him, hear, convict him
Before the magistrates; to this alone
Duty persuaded me, and this I've done:
No more remains for me to execute
Against him now.—Ah! if the people's voice,
And royal prayers avail to influence
The senate and the Ephori, in them
We of their clemency shall soon behold
A noble and a memorable proof.

Scene V.

AMPHARES, PEOPLE, EPHORI, SENATORS.

Am. A foe magnanimous, the best of fathers,
A perfect citizen, Leonidas,
Has well his task accomplish'd: it remains
Ours to accomplish also.—Agis stands
Convicted of high-treason: Ephori,
Say, what just punishment awaits him.
Ephori. Death.

People. Ephori, all of us implore your pity:
If he henceforward trouble not the state . . .
Am. Hear ye? . . . hear ye those loud and threat'ning shouts,
This way approaching? 'In his cause once more
The people rise already. While he lives,
Can Sparta rest? 'Tis folly to believe it.
Ephori. Die! let him perish, the rebellious traitor;
Let Agis die . . .
Am. He soon shall die, I swear.—
Meanwhile, O citizens, avoid at present
To meet the guilty and degraded people.
But let us with becoming hardihood,
The Ephori, the majesty of Sparta,
Present ourselves.—Guards, intercept the passage.
Let us depart; and let our aspect be
Nor timid nor elate. Great confidence
Soon makes the people recollect themselves.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Interior of the Prison of Sparta.

AGIS.

Agis. I hear tremendous howlings, and a loud
And turbulent confusion round my prison.—
Ye deities of Sparta, save my country!—
It grieves me that I did not keep a sword,
Whence, with my hands, I might at once extinguish
My own and Sparta's troubles at a blow.
Those whom Leonidas will send to slay me
Cannot delay much longer.—Much-loved children, . . .
Dear mother, . . . my belovèd spouse, . . . farewell . . .
No more shall I behold you! . . . I bequeath
To you a tender memory of myself . . .
But, for my mother's destiny I tremble:
She's in the tyrant's pow'r . . . What do I hear?
Who comes? The prison opens! . . . Who is this? . . .
O my dear wife . . .

Scene II.

AGIS, AGIZIADÈ.

Agi. I'm with thee, much-loved Agis . .
I from the palace of my father fled,
Where I, as in a prison, was immured.—
The people clear'd for me the path that led
To this thy dungeon; and the very guards
Had not the heart my entrance to forbid.—
At length I'm with thee.—O my spouse, I come,
If it be possible, to rescue thee;
Or with thee to expire.

Agis. Belovèd wife! . . .
My heart thou rendest . . . How much joy . . . and pain . . .
Thy presence brings me! . . . To preserve my life,
(For, by the death of many citizens,
I, if I would, might do it) thy true love
Alone could weigh with me. But, thou know'st well,
I ought not to prefer thee to my country,
Nor wouldst thou that I did. O, leave me, then,
To die; preserve thy own life; and defend
Those precious pledges of our love, our children . . .

Agi. Vainly should I attempt to rescue them
From the fierce hatred of Leonidas:
Unnatural father! in his prosp'rous state
I know him now without disguise; erewhile
In his adversity I was deceived.
No weapons now remain to me but tears;
These he despises: Sparta, with her arms,
Or nothing else, our children can preserve
From his atrocious rage.—But thou, at least,
Shouldst prove thyself a father; and preserve
Thy own life for thy children . . .

Agis. O great Heav'ns!
In these last moments what a fearful conflict
Dost thou now raise within me? Thou well knowest,
I love my children: but, their death is yet
Uncertain; and 'tis certain that in streams
The blood of Sparta's citizens would flow,
If I attempted force. Both these and those
My children are; but then the citizens

Are in a just king's sight his dearest children.—
O woman, if thou darest to survive me,
Thou canst defend them better than myself.
That courage, tender and sublime at once,
Which made thee the companion of thy father;
That courage, which induced thee to become
The faithful friend of my adversity;
That will suffice to be a guide to thee,
The safety of our children to ensure.
Guilty and fierce as is Leonidas,
He is thy father: if thy little ones
Thou claspest in thy arms; if thy pure breast
Becomes a refuge to their innocence;
He cannot have the heart to murder them.
Ah! run from hence, and hasten to their side,
As their defender watch; for them live on,
Or only die with them; for, if they perish,
Nothing compels thee then to drag on life.

Agi. Alas!... what shall I do?... If I should leave thee, ...
My cruel father would by force preserve me
In life;... and what a life! deprived of thee...
But, if he let our children live, ... the throne
They still would lose ... Ah! I will die with thee ...

Agis. O woman, hear me, and be pacified ...
Wouldst thou be less heroic as a mother,
Than as a daughter? Thou fear'dst not my wrath,
The day on which thy father thou didst follow;
Thou for his sake thy children didst desert,
And thy belovèd consort: wouldst thou now,
When thou dost leave him for thy children's sake,
Tremble at that same father? Thou with them
Mayst fly from hence: against him thou canst bring
Efficient weapons; thy own innocence:
In truth, thou hast a thousand means to try,
Ere thou resolve on death. Ah! I conjure thee,
Belovèd consort, try them; once again
Resume thy lofty heart; nor weaken mine,
With female lamentations. Wouldest thou
That I expired in tears? Ah, no!—If thou

Art worthy Agis, do not thou compel me
To make that Agis of himself unworthy.
Agi. Say, was paternal fondness ever deem'd
Unworthy of a father, the preferring
His children to himself? . . .
Agis. Before our children
Our country must be loved. For many a day
My blood has consecrated been to her;
Thine, if it needful be, shouldst thou devote
To our belovèd children: but thou givest,
If thou for their sakes dost consent to live,
To them, and to myself, a higher proof
Of thy great love. Thy tears may yet do much,
More than thou dost imagine: in the people
Will they, if in Leonidas they do not,
Excite compassion; and to them to save,
And without loss of blood, my little ones,
Will be most easy. Finally, reflect,
That Agis wholly dies not, while thou livest.
I, in a vulgar woman, should admire,
As proof at once of passionate regard
And of sublime devotion, the fix'd will
Not to survive her husband; but I hope,
And ask of thee—and thou, as Agis' wife
Must do it,—save thyself intrepidly
For a sad life, for our dear children's sake . . .
Weeping I ask it of thee; may these tears
Sink in thy heart . . . Ah! for thyself alone,
And for our children, hast thou seen at length
Thy Agis weep.
Agi. Irrevocably then
Hast thou decreed to die? . . .
Agis. Thou canst not doubt
My innocence.—Receive my last embrace;
And take it, in my name, to our dear children.
Tell them, that for my country's sake I die;
Tell them, that if they, when grown up, should ever
Come to the throne, they, for their father's death,
No other vengeance ever must inflict,
Than, imitating him, to renovate

The institutes sublime of great Lycurgus:
And, if in this, as I have done, should they
Find fate opposed, like brave men let them die,
As I do, in the noble enterprise.
Agi. I cannot speak . . . I now . . . in leaving thee . . .
Agis. A faithful counsellor, in my dear mother,
Wilt thou possess; . . . if still her life be spared!—
Now go; ah, leave me; go. A wife, a queen,
A mother, Spartan, and a citizen
Art thou; these lofty characters support.
Agi. For evermore? . . . O Heav'ns! . . .
Agis. Cease, cease, I pray thee.
Agi. My tott'ring feet can scarce support my frame . . .
Agis. Ah, come! when once thou hast departed hence,
Thou soon wilt find protection and support.
Agi. O misery! . . . The iron gate unfolds . . .
Agis. Guards, I consign to you your monarch's daughter.
Agi. Agis . . . Ah cruel! . . . I will never quit thee . . .
Agis! . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .

SCENE III.

AGIS.

Agis. —Unhappy I! . . .
How many deaths must I in one endure? . . .
That grief which husbands and which fathers feel,
What grief can ever equal?—Sparta, Sparta,
How much thou costest me! . . . Leonidas
Is yet a father: in my heart I feel
A grateful presage that he will consign
My children to his daughter.—Cease, my tears.—
My death is now approaching: as a Spartan,
And as a guiltless king, I ought to die . . .
O death, how tardy are thy steps!—But yet,
Behold, again I hear my prison gate
Grate on its hinges? . . . And I also hear
The shouts redoubled round these walls? . . . What now
Can this portend? . . . Whom do I see?

SCENE IV.

AGESISTRATA, AGIS.

Agis. O Heav'ns! . . .
O mother . . .
Ages. Son, in this thy hour of need,
To thee thy mother never could be wanting.
A liberty, that's worthy of ourselves,
I bring thee now.—In a far diff'rent shape
To thee I would have yielded it; but when
There was a time for this, thou didst thyself
Divest me of all means of doing it.
Agis. What? wouldst thou with these Spartan cries obtain . . .
Ages. In vain doth Sparta cry. The treach'rous tyrant
The place hath so well guarded with his soldiers,
That our adherents nothing can perform:
In vain do they attempt to force their ranks;
Inert, abash'd, disgraced, discomfited,
They are repell'd. Among our impious foes
Forward I darted; from behind I heard
Fierce voices in my favor, which exclaim'd:
"Dare you, ye vile ones, to forbid approach
"To Agis' mother?" Amphares then saw me;
Made them give way, and so I hither came.
Agis. Perfidious! He would also make thee captive.
Ah, mother! to what useless risk for me? . . .
Ages. Risk, dost thou say? Beside my son, I come
To certain death. Behold, in proof of this,
The gift I bring.
Agis. A sword?—O mother true!—
My breast did not contain another wish,
Than to possess a sword to rescue Sparta,
And to withdraw myself from death-wounds, given
By an ignoble hand: and thou, O joy!
Bringest one to me?—Give it me . . .
Ages. Choose thou:
Here are two swords; mine is the one thou leavest.
Agis. O Heav'ns! . . . And wilt thou? . . .
Ages. Dost thou reckon me
As a mere woman, or as Agis' mother?

Few years at best remain for me to live:
Sparta, which thou in vain dost hope to save,
Already is enthrall'd; if she remain,
Thy mother is Leonidas's slave.
Now speak; I hear thee: dar'st thou counsel me
On such conditions to consent to live?

Agis. What can I say? I am a son.—O mother,
Suffer me first to die: although enslaved,
Sparta is not extinct; hence other hands
May liberate her yet. Perchance my blood
To freedom may restore her: but if I,
Abject, in order not to shed my own,
Had let the citizens in my defence
Lavish their blood, then Sparta had been lost.

Ages. Sparta too certainly expires with thee.—
And wouldest thou that I, a Spartan mother,
Survive my son and country?—Son, embrace me.

Agis. O mother! . . . Thou indeed surpassest me
In dignity of soul.—Now give to me,
And take the last embrace. I dare not weep
In thus embracing thee; for in thine eyes
I see thy tears by fortitude restrain'd.

Ages. My Agis, . . . thou indeed art worthy Sparta; . . .
And I of thee am worthy.—Once again
Let me embrace thee . . . Whence this deaf'ning noise? . . .

SCENE V.

LEONIDAS, AMPHARES, *Soldiers with drawn swords*, AGIS, AGESISTRATA.

Le. At length we are victorious.
Ages. What's your purpose?
Agis. Ah! do not leave my side.
Am. Ye soldiers, strike
Agis to death, and afterwards his mother.[1]
Agis. Like me, conceal thy weapon for awhile;
Let us await their coming; and be silent.[2]
Am. Who now restrains you? Why delay ye thus?
Tear them asunder instantly by force.

[1] The soldiers approach Agis.
[2] The soldiers, seeing Agis immovably expect them, all pause at once.

Agis. Which of you, which, would dare lay hands on us ?—
O king Leonidas, dost thou behold ?
Even thy own bribed soldiers, stupefied,
Immovable, in Agis' presence stand.—
But, I will soon deliver thee from fear.
One thing alone do I demand of thee.
Le. It is ?
Agis. That thou attentively wouldst watch
Thy daughter, that she may not follow me.
Le. Is, then, her love for thee so strong ?
Agis. More strong
Than thy abhorrence.—But she loves thee too,
And gave thee proof of it; and, finally,
Thou art her father : my last words are these.[1]—
I die.—May Sparta . . . profit . . . by my . . . death.
Am. Has he a sword ?
Ages. Two swords I brought.[2]—O son, . . .
I follow thee; . . . and fall . . . upon thee . . . dead.
Le. I am struck dumb with terror and with wonder . . .
Ah, what will Sparta say ? . . .
Am. Their lifeless bodies
Should from the people be conceal'd . . .
Le. Ah, never,
Never from our own eyes can we conceal them.

[1] He brandishes his sword aloft, and kills himself.
[2] She also exhibits her sword, and kills herself.

XVI.

SOPHONISBA.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE characters in this play are the famous Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Carthage; Syphax, king of Western Numidia, or Mauritania, who has just been defeated and taken prisoner by Scipio, but who was formerly his friend; Masinissa, king of Eastern Numidia, or Massylia, the ally of Scipio and enemy of Syphax; and lastly, Sophonisba, daughter of Asdrubal of Carthage. She inherited all the hatred of Rome felt by her father and uncle, Hannibal. Originally betrothed to Masinissa by her father, she was given in marriage by the Carthaginians during his absence to Syphax, in order to secure his assistance against the Romans, the result being to drive Masinissa into the arms of Rome. The scene is laid during the Second Punic War, and in the year 203 B.C.

The tragedy opens with Syphax, who appears as a prisoner and in chains. He is joined by his conqueror and former friend, Scipio, who takes off his chains and gently reproaches him for having become the enemy of Rome. Syphax confesses that his change was brought about by the influence of his wife, Sophonisba. Scipio, when alone, is apprehensive that the wiles of the latter may turn away Masinissa from the Roman alliance.

The second Act introduces Sophonisba and Masinissa.

She believes that Syphax has been slain, and has already promised her hand to her old lover. She fears that Scipio will take her to Rome to grace his triumph, and makes him swear that he will never suffer her to be dragged alive from Africa. She retires as Scipio enters. The latter informs Masinissa that Syphax is still alive. He is overwhelmed with sorrow, and announces the intensity of his love for Sophonisba. He declares that nothing shall separate him from her, whatever may be the result as to his position towards Scipio and Rome. Scipio refuses to allow him to carry out his resolve.

At the beginning of the third Act, Sophonisba is alone, and asking herself the meaning of Masinissa's despairing conduct, after his interview with Scipio. To her amazement, Syphax, whom she thought dead, enters. He tells her that he only lives to be assured of her safety, although he knows that she married him solely out of hatred of Rome, and not for love of himself. She confesses that she has now promised her hand to Masinissa with a view to detach him from the Roman alliance. Scipio appears, and she tells him the same story. Her impassioned confession, and her determination never to leave Syphax again, now that he is restored to her, almost make Scipio weep.

Masinissa, when the fourth Act opens, tells a faithful follower to keep a bowl of poison in readiness for use, and awaits an audience with Sophonisba. She tells him that Syphax is coming to see him, and that she herself means to reunite her fortunes to her husband. He replies that he will never part with her. Syphax comes, and Masinissa at length generously proposes to procure the escape of his rival and Sophonisba with the help of his Numidian troops, and to escort them himself in safety to the gates of Carthage, avowing that he is solely instigated by his deep anxiety for Sophonisba's fate. Syphax refuses, and voluntarily offers to resign his wife to Masinissa, intending to

slay himself. Sophonisba rushes after him, leaving Masinissa in despair.

The last Act discloses Scipio, who is presently joined by Masinissa. He tells the latter that his plan for the escape of Syphax has been disclosed to him by Sophonisba herself, when she found that admission to the tent of Syphax was denied her; and further, that Syphax had destroyed himself. Sophonisba enters, and Scipio announces his intention of preparing the funeral pile for the dead king, and departs for the purpose. Sophonisba protests to Masinissa that nothing will now induce her to live, and that if he will not provide her with the means of carrying out her design, she will kill herself by taking no food. Finding all his entreaties useless, he calls for the bowl of poison and allows her to drink it, on condition that she leaves enough for him also. She, however, drains it to the dregs, and he is in the act of stabbing himself, when Scipio rushes in and disarms him.

Many plays and romances have been written on the story of Sophonisba. Amongst Scudéry's 'Harangues héroïques des femmes illustres,' appears a letter from Sophonisba to Masinissa. The first regular tragedy produced on the Italian stage was Trissino's *Sophonisba*, performed at Vicenza in 1514. Schlegel, who says, however, that he never saw this literary curiosity (which Sismondi praises highly), calls the author "a spiritless pedant." Mairet's play of the same name was performed in 1633 at Paris. It was the first French tragedy in which the rule of the three unities was observed, and contains the often-quoted line—

"Masinisse en un jour voit, aime, et se marie."

Mermet, Montchrestien, Corneille, Lagrange-Chancel, and Voltaire himself (under the pseudonym of Lantin), have

also written plays on the same subject, to which a portion of the second chapter of Petrarch's *Triumph of Love* is likewise devoted.

Alfieri says that everything combined to make this a tragedy of the first class: "An ardent lover, compelled himself to give poison to his beloved, to save her from an ignominious death; the contrast and development of the most lofty emotions of Carthage and Rome; and, in short, the sublimity of the names of Sophonisba, Masinissa, and Scipio." But in the result, he considers it, if not in the third class, at any rate only in the second. The two causes are the awkwardness of Sophonisba being the wife of two husbands, and the coldness and absence of passion in the character of Scipio. He thinks the character of Sophonisba one of the sublimest in tragedy; and if he has not made her so, it is his own fault. He ends by stating that he is not satisfied with the means employed in the fifth Act to induce Masinissa to kill Sophonisba, but that he found himself unable to devise any better.

SOPHONISBA.

"And so my much-beloved one met her death;
She, when she fell into another's power,
Rather than be a slave, preferr'd to die."
PETRARCH'S *Triumph of Love*, c. ii.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SOPHONISBA.	SCIPIO.
SYPHAX.	*Roman Soldiers.*
MASINISSA.	*Numidian Soldiers.*

SCENE.—*The Camp of Scipio in Africa.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SYPHAX, *with Roman Centurions.*

Sy. Ye may at least here leave me to myself,
Till Scipio has return'd.—My hands, my feet,
Are manacled with fetters; Syphax now
Stands in the centre of the Roman camp;
Of ev'ry means of flight is he bereft:
Grant him, at least, a respite from your presence.

SCENE II.

SYPHAX.

Sy. How hard to bear is military pride!
If their commander doth in haughtiness
Surpass them, as in valor true . . . But no;

Scipio is known to me: within my palace,
At Cirta, he was formerly my guest:
Most gentle and humane he then appear'd . . .
O foolish Syphax! dost thou speak in earnest?
Then Scipio came to thee to beg for aid;
Nor was he then thy victor.—Vanquish'd king!
Taken in fight, and bound in fetters, dragg'd
Within the foeman's camp, dost thou yet live? . . .
O Sophonisba! to what obloquy
Hast thou reduced me? Now, when I no more
Ought, or design to live, am I so fallen,
That e'en the pow'r of voluntary death
No more is mine? . . . But hark, the trumpet's sound
Scipio's approach proclaims. He comes. O sight!

Scene III.

SCIPIO, SYPHAX.

Sci. Let ev'ry man retire. My retinue
Would be an insult to the hapless king.—
Syphax, provided that the lofty pangs
Of vanquish'd kings admitted of relief,
Thou shouldst now hear me speak to thee in terms
Of pity: but the greatness of thy heart
Is known to me, to which each pitying word
Would be an added wound. So, at this moment,
Nothing will I attempt, except removing,
With my own hands, thy unbecoming fetters:
This thy right hand I ought indeed to loose.
A pledge at once of friendship and alliance,
I well remember that thou gavest it
To me in Cirta.—But, what do I see?
My kindness thou disdainest? motionless,
And fierce, thou fixest on the ground thine eyes?
Ah! if in battle Scipio had subdued thee,
He with no other fetters than thy own,
Than by reminding thee of thy sworn faith,
Thy person had enthrall'd. Then yield, I pray,
These iron manacles of thee unworthy;
Yield them to me; raise thy desponding brow;
And, at the same time, look on Scipio's face.

Sy. On Scipio's face? Oft have I seen it near,

With soul undaunted, in the ranks of war:
Fortune, the arbitress of all things, now
Wills that I should not dare to see it more.
Nought should the Romans to this camp have borne
But the dead body of what once was Syphax:
But to the valiant, death, though coveted,
Sometimes is not allow'd; and I am here,
Alas! a lamentable proof of this;
Ah, wretched that I am!—Hence have these chains
Become my portion; hence my downcast looks
Are to the dust condemn'd; for never more
Can I presume to raise them to the eyes
Of a triumphant foe.

Sci. Of the subdued,
Scipio is not the foe; and though till now
Fortune hath look'd on him with smiles alone,
He's not elated by a prosp'rous fate,
Nor would an adverse fortune make him vile.—
I am resolved to overcome thy pride
By courteous violence. Behold unloosed
Thy unbecoming chains: as man to man,
Equal with equal, now to Scipio speak.

Sy. Thou speakest courteously, and thou art courteous.
If to a king it were supportable
To be o'ercome, 'twould be so by thy arms.
But what can I now utter, that may seem
To thee becoming my past dignity,
And worthy of my present wretchedness?
And what remains for thee to say to me,
That I already know not?

Sci. I? To thee
I will confess, that yet so great I deem thee,
And so magnanimous, that I e'en venture
To ask of thee the reason of thy change.

Sy. It is not usual to make bare the heart,
Save to a faithful and experienced friend;
And kings are seldom, or are never bless'd
With friends like these. P'rhaps I, although a king,
Was once not undeserving of true friends:
And, as a proof of this, I now to thee,
Without disguise, will manifest my heart.

In thee, a gen'rous foe, 'twere more discreet
Than in pretended friends to place reliance.
Then listen to me.—Rome thy cradle was,
And I'm an African: the citizen
Of an illustrious commonwealth art thou;
I of a numerous and mighty nation
Was once the monarch. Interposing seas
Sever'd from mine thy country: I ne'er placed
In your Italia my encroaching feet;
Thou standest sword in hand in Africa.
The vanquisher of Carthage, 'tis your hope
To bring all Africa beneath your sway.
Carthage to me contiguous was, and hence
Alternately my foe and my ally:
And though she also, equally with Rome,
Execrates kings, her people, less than yours
Intolerant from pow'r and arrogance,
Was thence by me less bitterly abhorr'd.
By each free people is a monarch's heart
Offended tacitly; what anger, then,
Must that excite in him which dares to show
Tow'rds him a haughty front?—Behold the whole
Divulged to thee: my heart was resolute
To hate you e'en to death, as insolent
And predatory foreigners: to swear
To you fidelity and amity,
After your memorable deeds in Spain,
Became my interest.

Sci. But thou by proof
Hadst known the valor of the Roman arms;
Why didst thou violate thy faith with Rome?

Sy. —And what will Scipio say, if I divulge
To him the naked truth? That mighty Scipio,
Whose heart, the home of friendship and of pity,
And of all impulses sublime and human,
Hath hitherto proved inaccessible
To love alone.—The blandishments of beauty,
That irresistible captivity
Which love inflicts, hath wrought in me this change;
To thee do I confess it; and I feel not,
In saying it to thee, the blush of shame

Suffuse my face. A citizen thyself,
The love of fame impels thee to surpass
Thy fellow-citizens; hence art thou deaf
To other impulses: a king who sees,
Seated upon his throne, no rival near,
Such an incentive needs: hence, deaf to fame
His other flatter'd passions render him.
Believe thou this from an unhappy king;
For he may be sincere. Great as thou art,
Feel pity from it, rather than contempt;
For I disdain it not from Scipio only.

Sci. I never felt the flames of love, but I
Respect, and even fear, its boundless power.
Oft have I fled from it; for it is best
Its arrows to anticipate, whose wounds
Make impotent all after-remedies.
Thou, ere thou saw'st her, shouldst have felt mistrust
Of Sophonisba: she was, in a word,
The child of Asdrubal, in Carthage born,
Imbued with rancor and with hate tow'rds Rome,
E'en with her mother's milk: if thou wert then
By thy necessities united to us,
Clearly might'st thou foresee, that detriment
Must to thyself assuredly result
In forfeiting our friendship.

Sy. Deem'st thou nought
That which so oft deceives and governs man;
Hope? I imagined, that, to Asdrubal
United by such ties, in Carthage none
Would equal me in pow'r: then having seen
The charms of Sophonisba, caught, subdued,
In short, more fetter'd than e'en now I am
In this thy camp, with inadvertent steps,
I from one error to another fell.
For Sophonisba's sake I forfeit now
My kingdom, my renown, and, what is worse,
My self-esteem: and yet, wouldst thou believe it?
Fain would I languish out a few hours more
In hated life, that I at length may hear
Of her security. On her account
Do no foreboding thoughts of infamy

Oppress my heart; her soul, like mine, is lofty;
Nor could she ever, more than Syphax could,
Living, be dragg'd behind thy car a captive:
Now hear, not thoughts that do become a king,
But the wild ravings of a frantic lover.
A jealous fury tortures me, and makes
My vacillating life protracted death.
Perchance in Cirta, in my very palace,
Has Sophonisba, by your arms subdued,
Become already the ill-fated prey
Of Masinissa, of my mortal foe.
To him a promised spouse ere to myself;
P'rhaps now he burns for her . . . At such a thought,
With desperate inexplicable rage
I feel myself o'erwhelm'd. I wish to die,
And ought to die; and pow'rless as I am,
A thousand means of death do I possess:
But ah! I know not how, nor can I die,
Till I have learn'd her destiny. The prey
Of Masinissa, ah! (if prayers of mine
With thee weigh aught) ah! never, never grant
That she his prey become . . . O Heav'ns! . . . I burn
With rage . . . —But whither does that rage impel me,
Beyond my royal dignity?—No more
Remains for me to say. Permit that now
I to my tent withdraw: I would conceal
My unbecoming grief. Excepting Scipio,
No man should see me in the Roman camp
With face more ruffled than becomes a king.

Scene IV.

SCIPIO.

Sci. Unhappy king! His words excite in me
Equal compassion and surprise.—But, grieved
Am I at heart at that which he has told me.
By Masinissa, in beleaguer'd Cirta,
Will Sophonisba doubtlessly be seen:
And should he fall into the snares of love?
And should he waver in his faith to Rome? . . .
O valiant warrior, by myself beloved,

No less than indispensable to Rome,
For thee I tremble.—What unwelcome cares
Remain for thee, O Scipio! How much grief
Does it cost gen'rous hearts to practise force
Even on vanquish'd foes! Should I be then
Constrain'd to practise it against a friend? . . .
Ah, this indeed, this is the only duty
Of a commander, that my soul abhors.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA, NUMIDIAN SOLDIERS.

Ma. Lady, pause here: behold the leader's tent:
Scarcely will Scipio have been heard, or seen
By thee, than all suspicion from thy heart
Will be dispell'd.
So. O Masinissa, yet
Art thou not satisfied? I give to thee,
I, daughter as I am of Asdrubal,
A lofty and a fearful proof of love,
In coming with thee to the Roman camp:
But, that I should sustain the sight abhorr'd
Of the great Roman leader? . . . 'tis too much . . .
Ma. This camp we stand in, thou mayst call Numidian,
As much as Roman. For a pow'rful band
Of my troops here are placed, and I am here
No unimportant pillar of the war.
Daughter of Asdrubal art thou no more,
Widow no more of Syphax, since thou art
The promised spouse of Masinissa.
So. Ah!
Let not the friendship which to Scipio binds thee
Blind thee too much. He, whatsoe'er he be,
Is evermore a Roman; hence he deems
All things to Rome subservient; nor can he
To any enemy of Rome be friendly.
His rage against me will not be appeased

With having overcome, disgraced, and slain
Syphax, no; Cirta, taken and destroy'd,
The Massaesylii to the heavy yoke
Subjected all, have not appeased in him
His fierce ambitious thirst. Now, at the sight
Of Sophonisba almost in his hands,
Rightfully deem'd by him, for so I am,
Implacably the enemy of Rome;
Now, think'st thou not, that in his haughty heart
He harbors the insulting hope, to drag me,
Bound to his car, throughout the streets of Rome?
Yet, this I apprehend not; though a woman . . .

Ma. O Heav'ns! what thoughts are these? while there remains
Within these veins of mine one drop of blood,
Can that e'er be? Ah, no! believe it not;
Thy hate deceives thee now; thou know'st not Scipio.

So. Hatred and love now make me blind alike.
Here, ne'er should I have come: but, in the world
No place of safety now remains for me.
It pleased my heart to follow after thee,
And to my heart exclusively I trusted;
But my renown, my judgment, and my duty,
Appointed me, among its smould'ring ruins,
A sepulchre in Cirta.

Ma. Dost thou grieve
That thou hast follow'd me? Alas! my life
Is irksome then to thee.

So. To die not thine
Would now alone afflict me: and to this
Dost thou expose me. Thou art well aware,
O Masinissa, that e'en 'mid the flames
Of Cirta's royal palace, 'mid the death
Of my defeated people, I dared hear
Accents of love proceeding from thy lips . . .
Alas! . . . already for a long time, I,
By the renown of thy transcendent virtues,
Which fill'd all Africa, had been enthrall'd;
I, from my tend'rest infancy, to thee
Destined by Asdrubal, grew up at once
Thy lover and thy spouse. Then, like myself,

Wert thou the bitter enemy of Rome:
To Carthage and my father, afterwards,
It seemèd good to marry me to Syphax;
And to thyself it also seemèd good
To be the friend of Rome: thus destiny.
Disjoin'd us utterly . . .
Ma. Ah! we are now,
I swear to thee, for ever reunited.
Thou with me reignest, or I die with thee.—
The having personally seen and proved
The sov'reign virtue of the mighty Scipio,
And having never seen thy peerless beauty,
Were then the reasons that I fought for Rome.
Syphax had ever been my enemy;
He had despoil'd me of my throne: reduced
By adverse fortune to extremity,
I found, excepting Scipio, in the world
No friend: and the indissoluble tie
Of sacred gratitude then bound me to him.
Since have I, fighting for her with my blood,
Amply deserved the benefits of Rome:
But Scipio's benefits, his lofty, pure,
Disinterested friendship, can alone
By friendship, and by homage to his virtues,
Be recompensed by me. Thee, thee alone
Than Scipio more I love; thee only now
Prefer to him; for far more than myself
Do I love thee.
So. To give me then a proof,
Worthy of both of us, of this thy love,
Swear to me thou, that thou wilt never let me
Living be dragg'd from Africa.
Ma. 'Tis useless.
Yet, since thou will'st it, by this sword I swear it.
Should I have brought thee here, if I had thought
That here thou wert in danger? To my realm
I might securely have transported thee
With my Numidians: but the call of war
Summon'd me here; I never from thy side
Can be dissever'd: Africa and Rome
Shall learn to pay thee homage as my consort:

Hence I, an enemy to all disguise,
Will now proclaim thee such.
So. At length secure
In my proposal, and thy solemn oath,
I tranquillize myself . . . But, hitherward
A multitude advances: to thy tents
Meanwhile, 'mid thy Numidians, I retire.
Ma. Since thou dost wish it, do so. Scipio comes;
I fain would speak to him. I'll soon rejoin thee.

Scene II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

Ma. Scipio, I ne'er embrace thee with more joy,
Than when a victor I return: I seem
More worthy of thee then.
Sci. O Masinissa,
Thou'rt now become one of our main supports;
The builder-up of glory to myself
At the same time art thou: hence Heav'n well knows
How much I love thee; and thou know'st it too.—
But, tell me; (to the Roman leader speak not,
But to thy Scipio) tell me, dost thou now
Return indeed the victor?
Ma. By my hand
Cirta is captured, by my hand destroy'd;
Dispersed and slain are the remaining warriors
Of the dead king . . .
Sci. What sayest thou? e'en yet
Hast thou to learn that Syphax lives? . . .
Ma. O Heav'ns!
What do I hear? . . .
Sci. 'Tis true that dead in battle
Rumor reported him. He in that fight
Fell wounded, but not mortal was the wound;
And thence by Lelius taken to my camp
A captive . . .
Ma. Syphax lives? And in this camp? . . .
Sci. He is the noblest fruit of our success.—
But what do I behold? Does this afflict thee? . . .

Ma. O! . . . what . . . do I . . . not . . . feel! . . . From my surprise . . .
But . . . wherefore . . . with such . . . cold formality . . .
Dost thou receive me? . . . What dost thou conceal
Within thy breast?
Sci. Ah, Masinissa! thou,
Yes, thou indeed within thy breast dost hide,
And from thy faithful friend, a mighty secret.
Grief and distraction, rather than surprise,
Are on thy face alternately express'd:
Now, whence could this arise in thee, if thus
Syphax restored were not an obstacle
To the designs which thou now hast in view?
Ah, Masinissa!—All I know; to me
Thy silence doth reveal it: for thyself,
Excepting this, nought in the world I fear'd.
By her alone, whom now into this camp
Thou hast enticed, by her, and no one else,
Thy glory, and the glory of thy friend,
At once may be obscured. I did not stand
In Cirta at thy side: to distant friendship
Thou therefore didst prefer the flames of love.
But yet, I do not of thy deeds complain;
An ample proof of friendship thou dost give me,
In not depositing thy prize elsewhere,
Than in my camp; in wishing to confide
The conflicts of thy lacerated heart
To Scipio's heart alone.
Ma. —That Syphax lives
I hear most unexpectedly.—I hoped
In Sophonisba to have found a consort:
To me was she betroth'd, ere giv'n to Syphax:
He ineffectually defended her
Against our arms; and to a conquer'd king,
Taken in battle, there is nothing left.
But, though subdued, of lofty heart is Syphax;
Nor long will he, I feel assured, survive
This his disgrace.—But, be it as it may
With him, O Scipio, listen to my thoughts.—
A warm and genuine friend thou long hast found
In Masinissa: equally sincere,

And warmer as a lover, learn that he
Cares for no obstacles. A lukewarm flame
Never yet enter'd a Numidian heart:
Or I will be loved Sophonisba's spouse,
Or with her breathe my last. Within thy camp
I was myself impatient to conduct her:
Here only were the wishes of my heart
Satisfied fully; here, with lofty voice,
Did glory, honor, friendship, virtue call me;
Here, without forfeiting my love, I hope
Completely to discharge my sev'ral duties.
From my commander, and my faithful friend,
I wish to learn how we may best succeed
In overcoming Carthage; by what means
Rome's pow'r and lustre may be best increased,
And our own glory too; and, finally,
How I may best ensure my happiness.

Sci. Wert thou my only son, I swear to thee,
I should not mourn, as now I mourn, the blind
And youthful error that hath thus misled thee.
Our glory, the prosperity of Rome,
The imminent and total fall of Carthage,
And thy unrivall'd, genuine happiness,
All, all were in our pow'r; before that thou,
Vanquish'd in Cirta, didst become the prey
Of the assaults of woman: thou, alas,
Hast taken all from us, and from thyself,
With this thy fatal love.—But no; thou canst not
Stifle the cries of thy upbraiding heart;
Tow'rds Syphax never canst thou be unjust;
Nor canst thou ever to thy only friend
Be cruel and ungrateful. This thy love
Is by the life of Syphax now condemn'd,
Dissever'd, and annull'd: nor ever thou . . .

Ma. Nor ever? . . . Sophonisba shall this day
My consort be; I swear that she shall be.
And if, by living, Syphax would protract
My anguish and his infamy, he ought,
Upon this spot, himself, with his own hand,
With his own sword, to slay me; or himself
To-day, by my hand immolated, fall.

Sci. Syphax defenceless, and a prisoner,
Is in our camp; and in his heart conceives not
'Gainst Masinissa an unworthy thought.—
Thou ravest now; but I am well assured,
If once thine eyes beheld that wretched king,
Thou, gen'rous, far from treating him with scorn,
Ah yes! wouldst be the first to pity him.—
But, granting that, by some means, Syphax die,
And hence thou be the undisturb'd possessor
Of Sophonisba; to what party then,
Think'st thou, wouldst thou betake thyself?
Ma. .—To Rome,
And to my Scipio bound eternally,
No pow'r on earth . . .
Sci. But, tell me: more than Rome,
Lov'st thou not Sophonisba?
Ma. —I? . . . At present
That would I not examine.
Sci. Wretched friend!
I, ere thyself, already know thou dost.
I know, that sacrificing thy true welfare,
Thy judgment, and the sacred austere names
Of gratitude, of friendship, and of faith,
As victim to a luckless destiny,
Thou rushest on destruction. Thou canst not
Asdrubal's daughter at thy side long keep,
And all the time remain the friend of Rome,
And make thyself of Carthage the destroyer.
Thy fate I fervently regret. For kings,
The enemies of Rome, thou knowest well,
Or soon or late, what ruin is reserved.
I speak not thus with menacing intent,
O no! suspect it not: may Heav'n forbid
That I should ever be the instrument
Of the just rage of Rome against thyself!
This sword of mine, which formerly avail'd
To reinstate thee in thy throne, ah no!
Shall never with thy not inferior sword,
Which hath augmented so illustriously
Rome's lofty victories, for mast'ry strive:
No, rather than 'gainst thee, would I direct

Its point against myself: but, tell me now:
Am I, perchance, all Rome? I am, thou knowest,
A private citizen of Rome; nor arms,
Nor counsellors, nor captains, doth she want.
Another leader in my place will come,
With equal fortune, with superior judgment,
And less compassion, to these fated shores;
And he will make thee recollect thy faith,
Though pledged so solemnly, so badly kept.
Ma. Now, wouldst thou that a man who's Scipio's friend,
Should, to the terror of precarious ills
In future times, yield that which he denies
To yield to friendship? Ill thou knowest me.—
In short, I ask of thee, whether of Cirta,
Spoil'd by my sword and my Numidian bands,
And by my blood and theirs; whether to-day
The booty of that Cirta doth belong
To Rome or to myself: if Sophonisba,
My promised consort, by myself alone
Conducted hither, in this camp is deem'd
The wife of Masinissa and a queen,
Or if she be the slave of Rome?
Sci. —She was,
And is, (alas, but too undoubtedly!)
The wife of Syphax still.
Ma. I understand thee.
O agony! . . . And dost thou hope? . . .
Sci. To thee,
O Masinissa, I resign the choice:
From post to post defenceless in this camp
I wander; thou by thy Numidians here
At once mayst cut me off; thou mayst thyself
Plunge in my heart thy sword: but, to thy ruin
I will not suffer thee to rush, if first
Thou kill me not. But if thou have the heart
To wish my ruin, of my own accord,
I, for thy sake, embrace it. Keep thy prey:
Rome and her senate then shall hear me be
My own accuser: I will there proclaim
That to our private friendship I was pleased

To sacrifice the interests of Rome,
And of thyself; and I must, as the fruit
Of my equivocal regard for thee,
Reap unequivocal disgrace.
Ma. O Scipio,
Thy too great friendship is a thousand times
More cruel to myself than menaces,
Or arms, could ever be... Unhappy I!...
My heart thou rendest.—But no pow'r can thence
Extract the firm inextricable dart
That love hath planted there. Thy words infuse
Corroding poisons to the cureless wound:
Alas! this is unheard-of agony...—
Make me at once outrageously ungrateful,
And treat me as a foe inveterate;
Or, as a pitying friend, bear with my woes...
Thou see'st my tears; thy tears canst thou restrain?—
What do I say? ah vile! what dare I say
In Scipio's presence?—Thou hast hitherto
Beheld me mad.—No more shalt thou so see me.—
Shortly shall Scipio, general of Rome,
Learn what is the immutable resolve
Of Masinissa, the Numidian king.
Sci. Ah! hear me...

Scene III.

SCIPIO.

Sci. Hence he flies! I will pursue him:
In this distracted state I will not leave him;
Spite of himself he should be saved; his heart
Is noble; my solicitude he merits.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA.

So. Unhappy I! What can have happen'd now?
What fatal, what tremendous mystery
Doth Masinissa harbor in his breast?
What hath vindictive Scipio said to him?
Ah! evermore, I evermore foresaw
That fatal to us both this camp would be.—
O Masinissa! . . . On my face thine eyes,
Pregnant with tears of pity, now are fix'd,
And yet thou dar'st not speak to me . . . With words
Broken and falt'ring now thou call'st me thine:
Now, stern and desperate, thine arid eyes,
With a ferocious recklessness, from me
Thou turn'st away; upon the naked earth
Panting thou castest thy convulsèd limbs;
And with terrific howlings dost invoke
The' infernal furies . . . Ah! thou hast transfused
Already thy own furies in my breast.—
Be they whate'er they may, my heart contain'd
A presage of the menaces of Scipio:
All I foresee; yet nothing do I fear.
Now that he is my open enemy,
As he should be, now will I Scipio hear,
And make him hear the thoughts of Sophonisba . . .
But who is this approaching me? Is this
Reality? . . . O Heav'ns! Is Syphax living? . . .
And in this camp? . . . O unexpected sight!

SCENE II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA.

Sy. A deep amazement on thy face is painted,
O woman, in beholding me again?—
I should have been no more: in this respect
Report propitious was, but fortune adverse.

So. O unexpected and appalling sight!
Now is the horrid mystery at once
Fully unravell'd . . .
Sy. To thyself thou speakest?
Speak, speak to me. Behold me; I am he,
Thy consort am indeed, who, for thy sake,
My sceptre and my honor having lost,
Deprived of both, in Roman fetters bound,
Yet on the brink of the much wish'd-for tomb
Awhile delay my steps to learn thy fate.
So. O words! . . . Alas! where, where to hide myself? . . .
Sy. Ah! do I see on thy bewilder'd face
At once, O Heav'ns! the marks of shame and death?
Thy dreadful and impenetrable silence
Speaks a clear language: in thy heart I read
The conflict of a thousand impulses.
But, no reproaches shalt thou hear from me:
Although insulted, and in fetters bound,
By all deserted, yet for thee far more
Than for myself I feel compassion. Woman,
Thou knowest if I loved thee.—I'm aware
That Asdrubal's commands, the bitter hate
That thou for Rome hast in thy breast, alone
Were thy conductors to my bed; for me
Thou never feltest love. Thus I myself,
Thou seeest, plead in thy defence. I know
That with another not unworthy flame
Thy bosom glow'd, before thou wert my spouse.
Love, by experience, well I comprehend:
Its force omnipotent, its madnesses,
I know them all: and hence, despite myself,
I ever loved thee. Though, by laws divine
And human, bound to love me in return,
It was ne'er possible for thee to love me.—
Hence jealous rage, by little and by little,
Fed on my heart: I thirsted for revenge;
And on my hated rival still could wreak it,
Although a captive . . . But thou conquerest, woman:
More than a jealous lover, I, a true one,
Would now leave thee in safety by my death.—
Groaning, to pardon thee; a life of horror,

Though hating it, to live, and this alone
In order to behold thee; ardently
At once to wish thee dead, and blest with others;
Now, as the luckless source of all my ills,
To curse thee; weeping, to adore thee now,
As the sole blessing left to me in life . . .
Behold, amongst what agitating Furies,
The latest moments I drag on for thee
Of my protracted and opprobrious life.
So. . . . I will presume, although with trembling voice,
To show to thee my thoughts.—Not much remains
For me to say: magnanimously thou
My cause already hast too warmly pleaded:
Daughter of Asdrubal, and wife of Syphax,
It now remains alone for me to die,
As worthy of these names.—At the report
Spread of thy death, 'tis true that I presumed
My hand to promise; but 'tis not yet given:
Thou livest, and to Syphax I belong.
Thy vengeance, join'd with mine, to wreak 'gainst Rome,
No firmer champion could have been secured
Than Masinissa. Blinded by this hope,
And caught (I'll not deny) by his great prowess,
I purposed to estrange him from the Romans,
And make him the deliverer of Carthage.
But Syphax lives? Then I return once more,
Whatever fate he choose, to be of that
A constant, and not quite unworthy, partner.
Sy. Thy lofty proposition deeply soothes
A wretched monarch, and a spouse not loved;
But to a lover, as I am to thee,
Ardent beyond expression, it is death.
I have already, and a long time since,
Fix'd in my heart my fate, which thou, O no!
Shouldst never share with me. Then, woman, now
Listen to my entreaties and commands . . .
But I see Scipio, who advances hither:
He is the only person in the world
To whom I would address my latest accents.

Scene III.

SCIPIO, SOPHONISBA, SYPHAX.

Sy. Hear me, O Scipio:—In thy presence vanish
Dissembling purposes; all shame departs
That would forbid me to confess a weakness:
Thou, although none in thy great heart abide,
Great as thou art, conceivest them in others,
And pitiest them humanely.—This is she,
(Attentively regard her,) the sole cause
Is she of all my wretchedness; but yet
All my affections I have placed in her.
Thou for myself hast not yet seen me tremble;
Now for another I descend to prayers;
I am compell'd to do it . . .

So. Certainly
Asdrubal's daughter causes not thy prayers.
Am I not equally with thee secure?—
What, Scipio, canst thou do to me? I, born
A Carthaginian, enemy to Rome,
And in the Roman camp a prisoner,
I yet undaunted stand . . .

Sci. The fatal pow'r,
The shifting pow'r of destiny, O woman,
Places us all in hard extremities.
I do not, most assuredly, exult
In your calamities: and thou in vain
Now in my presence makest a parade
Of thy innate antipathy to Rome.
What though the cruelties of Hannibal
Banish from Roman bosoms all compassion,
Thence do I not a bitter hate indulge
Against our enemies. When I am forced
To meet with them in battle, if victorious,
I envy and admire them; if subdued,
I pity and I aid them.

Sy. Thence, to thee,
That which to no man I would e'er have said,
I trust myself to say . . .

So. What wouldst thou say?
Thou, for thyself, wouldst certainly not ask

Aught from the victor; nothing e'er from him
Would I receive; not even his compassion:
What is there more to say? Before great Scipio,
Say, who would venture to degrade himself?
But, e'en were I degraded, to behold
Before my eyes the spoiler of my race,
The instrument of ultimate destruction
To my illustrious country, that alone
With rage magnanimous would now inflame me.
The foe of Scipio, though he be humane,
I am as much as I'm the foe of Rome:
Worthy of this to make myself, I ought
Rather in Scipio now to wake surprise,
Than puling tenderness.

Sci. Each lofty soul
Which meets with adverse fate, doth well-nigh make me
Abhor my own prosperity.

So. A joy
Fatal, but yet a joy, glows in my breast,
Now that I am allow'd at length to open
My feelings to the noblest of the Romans.
The mingled passions that assail my heart,
Thou only canst conceive, who art at once
A perfect man and citizen.—To him,
Cradled in Carthage, no less than to him
Who pass'd his childhood on the Tiber's banks,
The name of country, more than all things else,
Is graven in the heart. Effeminate thoughts
In me, although a woman, never held
More than a second place. I loved those best,
Proud Romans, who best hated you. Your foe
Was Masinissa once; and at the sound
Of his magnanimous and youthful feats
Was I inflamed. Of Rome was Syphax then
I know not whether the ally or vassal.—
These now are my last words: I speak to Scipio,
And to thee, Syphax: artifice avails not;
For both of you know well the heart of man.—
The traces of the first of our impressions
Remain profoundly graven in our breasts:
Hence, hearing that the death of Syphax gave

Entire superiority to Rome;
And Masinissa's image to my thoughts
At the same time occurring; I design'd
(Perchance my heart suggested it) to wean
From Rome her champion, and to make of him
A shield for Carthage, and myself. Thence I
Hither among your eagles came a foe:
And the audacious hope that swell'd my heart
To lure from your alliance Masinissa,
Induced me to relinquish many duties;
I feel the dereliction; culpable,
And self-convicted, I proclaim my guilt;
And I already am prepared to make
A lofty reparation. P'rhaps my fate
Led me with hand invisible towards you,
To give no mean impression of myself:
Behold, a path is open'd to me now
To manifest to Rome what lofty soul
May animate a woman born in Carthage.

Sy. My unexpected life, I clearly see,
Is both the sole and fatal obstacle
To ev'ry view of thine: but my existence
Will be a vain and transitory shadow.
My real life in that same moment ceased
When ceased my liberty: thou knowest well
For what I did survive. I learn from thee
Heroic fortitude. Although thy words
Inflict a horrid torment in my heart,
Thou shouldst have told thy thoughts to me alone;
I left thee worthy to avenge my fate;
And so I leave thee now . . .

So. O doubt it not,
Others remain who will avenge us. Each
His duty must accomplish; mine is changed,
By thy return to life.—I've open'd to thee
The most conceal'd affections of my heart:
This Scipio heard; to whom I were a foe
Unworthy, had I spoken otherwise.

Sci. Thy words, at once sublime and frank, convince me
That thou esteemest me no vulgar foe.
Ah! that I could . . .

So. I've said enough.—Now, Syphax,
We should withdraw . . .
Sy. Soon will I follow thee . . .
So. No, no: henceforward will I never quit thee.
Sy. And yet thou shouldst abandon me . . .
So. I will not;
And this resolve in mighty Scipio's presence
I with an oath confirm.—Ah, come with me:
From the so many black and dreadful storms
That now assail us, may a transient respite
At least be granted. I, although a woman,
Have hitherto by force restrain'd my tears:
O Scipio, 'tis impossible to weep
When thou art present: but imperious Nature
At length will have her tribute. 'Tis the part
Of fortitude to bear adversity;
But not to feel its pressure when it comes,
Rather implies stupidity than strength.
Sy. Unhappy I! Why have I lived so long? . . .

Scene IV.

SCIPIO.

Sci. Sublime this woman is: to be a Roman
She's worthy.—Scarcely can I check my tears.

ACT IV.

Scene I.

MASINISSA, *Numidian Soldiers.*

Ma. Let all, obeying my commands, at night
Be ready with their steeds; and silently
Let them, O Bocar, ambush where I told thee.—
Faithful Guludda, thou, at all events,
Meanwhile be ready with my fatal bowl.
Of ev'ry monarch 'tis the sole resource,
Who would become the friend or enemy
Of execrable Rome.—Go hence; and let
Nothing of this transpire.

SCENE II.

MASINISSA.

Ma. O Masinissa,
Must thou descend to art to save thy rights? . . .
Ne'er for myself would I do this; but I
Should place in safety her whom I've endanger'd,
Or perish with her.—Do I in this place,
With difficulty, a brief audience gain? . . .
O Heav'ns! then is she absolutely changed? . . .
But see, she comes . . . I tremble.

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

So. I expected
No more to see thee; and in truth I ought not:
But (when thou hear'st it, canst thou trust my words?)
Syphax himself enjoin'd it . . .
Ma. Was he moved
By scorn or pity?
So. Magnanimity;
More than enough to re-awaken in us
A noble emulation. He himself
Would fain converse with thee: but he commands
That I precede him; and that . . .
Ma. Can I bear
A sight like this? . . .
So. Art thou less great than he?
Fears he thy sight?
Ma. Nor can I tell thee first . . .?
So. What canst thou tell me, that I ought to hear?
Ma. In vain dost thou inflict on me new torments:
I would inform thee, that I here enticed thee,
And that I would, at any cost, myself
Drag thee from hence.
So. I gave myself to thee,
Thou knowest it; from thee I take myself.
A lofty duty, fatal to myself,
Demands this sacrifice: I certain am,
By following Syphax, to withdraw myself

From ev'ry ill. Do thou, then, now from me
Learn to be strong. This is the camp of Rome:
Scipio is station'd here; a monarch, thou
Art station'd here: and I am station'd here,
Asdrubal's daughter: tell me; wouldst thou now
That ours should only be a vulgar love?

Ma. Ah! with a flame far different to thine
My bosom is consumed . . . In thee alone
I place my fame, my glory, and my greatness . . .
Thou shouldst be mine; although my kingdom perish;
The whole world perish; . . . mine thou shalt be. I
Perils and losses neither know nor fear.
I am prepared for all, except to lose thee;
And sooner . . .

So. With possession of my heart,
Ah, be thou satisfied . . . Prove *not thyself*
Of this unworthy . . . *But, what do I say?*
The sight, the sight alone of *Syphax, pow'rless,*
Vanquish'd, and captive, *yet serene and firm,*
Will of itself restore to *thee thy reason.*

Ma. Unhappy I! . . . Could I at least alone! . . .—
But I am not less generous than you;
I am indeed far different a lover:
And I prepare to yield to you of this
A memorable proof . . .

So. See, here is Syphax.

Ma. —He, too, may hear me; nor will ye have then
Courage to scorn me.

Scene IV.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Ma. Now before thine eyes,
Syphax, thy mortal foe presents himself;
But thou beholdest him in such a state,
That he no more thy indignation merits.

Sy. All indignation from a king in chains
Would be but foolishness. If in my presence
My rival formerly had shown himself,
While I possess'd a sword, I might have then
Display'd to him no inefficient wrath:

Now, cruel fate hath nothing left to me,
But a firm visage and impassive heart.
Hence shalt thou hear me speak to thee with mildness.
Ma. My desperate, immeasurable grief
Should be to thee no trifling consolation:
Then learn what that grief is.—See me: I am
Far more enchain'd than thou art, far more vanquish'd,
More stripp'd of judgment, and far less a king.
Thou tookest formerly my realm, but then
Thou wert not, as thou'rt now, my conqueror:
An indefatigable foe, more fierce,
More ardent, always I arose again
From my defeats; till I alternately
Became a conqueror, regain'd my own,
And took thy kingdom.—But do thou exult,
And triumph; for this noble woman now,
Whom thou hast twice from Masinissa snatch'd,
Gives thee the palm of perfect triumph o'er me.
So. And wouldest thou that I indeed should blush
At thy weak courage? . . .
Ma. I not yet have given
Proof of my courage to you: 'twill at least
Keep pace with my despair.—Ye are, I see,
Both by premeditated death sustain'd.
Worthy of both is this resolve; and I
Feel its sublime attraction much as others;
And unto both of you 'tis suitable,
Singly consider'd. Thou, a fetter'd king,
Longer wilt not, nor oughtest, to exist:
Thou art determined, thou, the wife of Syphax,
Daughter of Asdrubal, before all Rome
To show a lofty and intrepid spirit;
Nor art thou sway'd by any impulses,
Save those of wrath and hate. But how can Syphax,
He who adores thee; who hath been impell'd
To his entire destruction for thy sake,
And thy sake only; he who doth possess
No less an ardent than a noble heart;
O Heav'ns! ah! . . . how, how can he bear to hear
That his belovèd wife is doom'd to perish? . . .
So. And could he, even if he would, divert
Me from my duty?

Sy. Whence canst thou thus know
My thoughts?
Ma. I, by far diff'rent furies sway'd,
I cannot now from thee conceal my own;
Nor will I change them, if I die not first.
At all risks wish I Sophonisba safe;
And she (I understand) will not be saved,
Cannot be saved, if Syphax also is not.—
Already my Numidians are accoutred:
If, at the gath'ring of the shades of night,
Thou, Syphax, to be one of these wilt feign,
I swear to thee to be thy guide myself,
And, with thy Sophonisba, to conduct thee,
Unhurt and unassail'd, e'en to the gates
Of your belovèd Carthage. There mayst thou
Collect arms, steeds, and troops: for while a king
Retains his freedom, he is yet unconquer'd.
I will abandon Rome's abhorrèd banners;
And I for Carthage and our Africa,
And for thyself perchance, will henceforth fight.
Whenever thou shalt have regain'd thy realm
And sov'reign sway, so that, as king with king,
We to the trial of the sword may come,
I then will claim of thee with this my sword
This most belovèd woman; whom I now
To thee surrender for no other cause,
Than to avert from her an immature,
A wretched dreadful death.
So. Thou fruitlessly
Proposest an impracticable scheme . . .
Sy. His language intimates a lofty heart;
Me he offends not: nay, he does impel me
Another, and more certain, means to offer;
Easier for him, and less unworthy Syphax;
And 'tis . . .
Ma. Ye, by adversity subdued,
Deem that impracticable which to me
Would be most easy; but, if honor prompt you,
Dare and attempt with me. At hand at all times
Is death, the last and certain remedy;
To men of courage it is always present:
But indispensable to all of us,

It is not yet. Not till to-morrow's dawn
Deluded Scipio of our flight will hear;
Just as he is, and in his heart humane,
My rights he may respect: at all events,
Thanks to our fleet-hoof'd steeds, by break of day
We shall have pass'd pursuit. If any one
Should venture to pursue us, then I swear
That I would rather e'en in Scipio's breast
Plunge deep my sword, than ever yield you to him.
This sword of mine, which hath so many times
Already saved me; this, whence I regain'd
Not only my own realm but that of others,
Will that suffice not to place both of you
In Carthage safe? Now, for a brief while, yield,
O Syphax, yield to fortune: finally,
Yet mayst thou fly from hence; nor wilt thou be
To me at all indebted. Foes were we;
And foes once more we shortly may become;
The danger of an object loved alike
By both of us, 'tis this, and this alone,
That silences our hatred and revenge.
Hear me address thee as a suppliant now;
In thee is thy deliv'rance placed. But yet,
If cruelly thou dost detest thy foe
More than thou lov'st thy wife, at any rate
Before thy death, on him thy vengeance wreak.
Behold my naked sword; plunge it in me.—
Kill me, or follow me.

Sy. O Masinissa! . . .
Amid the turbulence of thy fierce passion,
A passion so immense, a ray of hope
Upon thee still doth shine; thou art not conquer'd,
Nor pow'rless, nor a captive: thence thou seeest
Human affairs with other eyes than mine.
But in my heart, more agonized than thine,
Beneath a brow serene and undisturb'd,
There is conceal'd such a tormenting flame,
Such grief, such desolation, and such rage,
That language fails to represent my anguish . . .
Yes, my distraction never can be known
To one, who loving, is beloved again . . .

Ah, so much is my agony more fierce,
Inflicted by the asps of jealousy,
As I see Sophonisba more intent
The passions of her lacerated heart
To hide magnanimously. I'm impell'd
On to a conflict worthy but severe,
By her undaunted courage.—Jealous rage,
Ambition, vengeance, all my furies yield
To love alone.—Now, more than half the knot
Already is unloosed. Now, listen to me,
O woman. Thee I love, for thy own sake,
Nor for myself: hence had I, as a spouse,
Rather myself resign thee to another,
Than for my sake behold thee die in vain.

So. What do I hear? Alas! . . . What dar'st thou tell me? . . .

Sy. I hope that thou wilt hear thy consort's prayers:
And, where his prayers suffice not, wilt obey
His last commands.—The wife of Masinissa
Thou hither camest: . . . I restore thee now
To Masinissa, wife.

So. Ah! no . . .

Sy. O thou,
Who couldst protect her when she was not thine,
Now that I've made her thine, wilt do it better.—
Farewell, for ever. To pursue my steps
Let none of you presume.

Scene V.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA.

So. No pow'r on earth
Shall now prevent me from pursuing thee.—
Farewell, . . . ah Masinissa! . . .

Scene VI.

MASINISSA.

Ma. O despair! . . .
Brief is the time: both would forestall me . . . Heav'ns!
I only fear to be less swift than they.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

SCIPIO, CENTURIONS.

Sci. Already I know all. Let each of you
Watch as the guardians of the Roman tents
During the coming night: but I give also
Explicit orders to you, that ye should
Abstain with care from vexing the Numidians
With obstacles or insults. Go from hence;
Let all things pass in quietness.

SCENE II.

SCIPIO.

Sci. Thy rage
Thou shouldst have wreak'd against my breast alone,
Ungrateful Masinissa; or on me
Its violence, like billows on a rock,
Should have been broken.—But confused he bears
Tow'rds me his wav'ring steps: perchance he knows
The destiny of Syphax ... How I feel
Pity for him!—Ah! come to me; ah! come...

SCENE III.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA, *a Numidian Soldier apart.*

Ma. Here, O Guludda, wait for me.—Prepared
I was not for this meeting.
Sci. What? wouldst thou
Avoid me? I am evermore thy Scipio:
Thou now in vain dost seek thyself elsewhere;
I only can restore thee to thyself.
Ma. I was bereft of reason on that day,
In which I made with you a guilty traffic
Of life and honor for degrading chains.
But for this step perchance I yet may make
The due atonement; and 'twill be sublime.

Then wilt thou see that I have perfectly
Regain'd my reason.
Sci. I've already told thee;
Thou mayst, O Masinissa, yet destroy me:
But, while I breathe, thou art constrain'd to hear me.
Ma. Time fails me now for this...
Sci. Enough remains.—
But, what dost thou expect? Thy stratagems
To me are all divulged: clandestinely
Armed and accoutred, thy Numidians stand
Within their tents; thou hast resolved from hence
To rescue Syphax, and with him...
Ma. If thou
Already know'st so much; if the base arts
Of spy and tyrant have so far impell'd thee,
That thou hast purchased those who would betray me
E'en 'mong my troops; to consummate thy task
Add force to stratagem, since thou canst boast
More soldiers than myself. Thou seeest me
Always prepared to die; but, not to change.
Sci. Thou wrongest Scipio; and he pardons thee.
Tow'rds thee no other weapon will I use,
Than that of truth; with that will I subdue thee.
Thy Sophonisba, who loves thee so much,
(Wouldst thou believe it?) she herself erewhile
Fully reveal'd to me thy stratagems...
Ma. What do I hear? O Heav'ns!...
Sci. I swear to thee,
O Masinissa, that I speak the truth.
Erewhile, by his express demand, she was
Refused admittance to the tent of Syphax;
Hence, stung to agony by rage and grief,
All thy designs to me did she divulge.—
But she divulged in vain: thou hast the power
Still, if thou wilt, to rescue her from hence.
Carthage in thee her champion may possess;
I interdict it not: the injury
On me alone will fall; on me alone,
Who, at one stroke, both fame and friend will lose.
But ah! may Heav'n avert, that finally
Greater calamities o'erwhelm thee not!

Ma. And Sophonisba's self . . . would, for thy sake, . . .
Betray me? . . . 'Tis incredible. From whence? . . .
Sci. She, far superior to her destiny,
Intends to give thee other proofs of love.
To stern necessity the loftiest yield:
The last and desperate resolve of Syphax
Gives to her noble heart a strong incentive.
Ma. What meanest thou by these ambiguous words? . . .
Of what proofs speakest thou? Of what resolve
Of Syphax? . . .
Sci. What? dost thou not know it? Scarce
Had Syphax in his tent arrived, when swift
As lightning, on the sword of the centurion,
Who as a guard was station'd there, he rush'd;
The hilt he planted on the earth, and fell,
Collecting all his might, upon the blade . . .
Ma. O blest a thousand times is he! thus freed
From execrable Rome . . .
Sci. With his last breath
He order'd that admission there should be
To Sophonisba forcibly denied.
Ma. And she? . . . Ah! now I clearly comprehend
The horror of her state . . . But O, too far
Is mine remote from Syphax' destiny!
Conquer'd by thee, by his own hand he fell:
I, not as yet subdued, would fall beneath
A Roman sword, with my own sword in hand.
Sci. Ah, no! thou oughtest not like them to perish.
Rather than death, and worthier of thyself,
Sublimer fortitude thy life would show.
Ma. Without her live? . . . Ah! that I never can . . .
Cannot I rescue her by any means? . . .
I will yet see her only once more.
Sci. Ah!
Assuredly her language may avail,
More than I can myself, to re-excite
Its noble impulses within thy breast.—
Behold her; 'tis her wish to plant herself
Near to my tent; before the eyes of Rome,
And in the presence of all Africa,
She wishes to fulfil each cruel duty.

Hear her; with her I leave thee now: thy Scipio
In both of you confides; thou wilt not suffer
Her to surpass thee in sublimity.

Scene IV.

SOPHONISBA, SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

So. Ah! stop. O Scipio, I have come to thee;
And me dost thou avoid?
Sci. A sacred duty
Enjoins that I prepare for the dead king
A splendid funeral pile . . .
So. Hither at least,
I pray thee, soon return. This will henceforth
Be my perpetual dwelling-place: and here
I swear to wait for thee.

Scene V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Ma. Perfidious one!
And dost thou also to inhuman pride
Add treach'ry?
So. Treach'ry?
Ma. Treach'ry, yes: while I
Prepare to save you, or to die for you,
Thyself revealest my design to Scipio?
So. —Syphax allow'd me not to die with him.
Ma. He wish'd thee safe with me.
So. Already he
His freedom had regain'd; that which I seek,
And shall obtain.—I cannot, if my fame
I would not forfeit, from the Roman camp
Withdraw myself with thee. With a true love
Too much thou lovest and hast lovèd me,
That I should save myself at such a risk:
I am too worthy of thy tenderness,
E'er to allow thee to do this. I have,
In making manifest thy purposes,
Taken nought from thee but the fatal power
My honor and thy glory to betray.

Ma. Thou art deceived: nought hast thou taken from me;
Yet I may all achieve: whole streams of blood
I yet may shed: all mine will I pour out,
Ere I leave thee a slave . . .
So. Am I a slave?
Such dost thou now account me?
Ma. In the pow'r
Of Rome art thou . . .
So. Of Rome? As yet I am
In my own pow'r; or in thy pow'r, if thou
Feel'st for me yet the pity of a king.
Ma. Thou mak'st me tremble . . . On thy countenance
I see a horrible security,
The harbinger of voluntary death . . .
But, I would lead thee . . .
So. All would be in vain:
There is no force on earth that can avail
To counteract my will, which is in me
The child of duty. Indispensable,
Immutable, impending, is my death;
And 'twill, I hope, be free; although I am
Of all things destitute; although I left
In Cirta, inadvertently, the last,
The only friend of subjugated kings,
My faithful poison; from my lover's lips
Although I heard a sacred solemn oath,
That he would wrest me from the hands of Rome; . . .
An oath committed to the vagrant winds.
Amid these haughty eagles yet a queen,
Daughter of Asdrubal, no less secure,
No less collected in myself I stand,
Than if in Carthage, or within my palace.—
But thou, thou speakest not? . . . distracted looks,
Swimming with tears, thou fixest on the ground? . . .
Ah! trust me, my affliction equals thine . . .
Ma. But their effects are different: deprived
Of all my courage, weaker than a woman,
Trembling I stand; while thou . . .
So. The state of each
May be dissimilar: but not our hearts . . .

Believe my words: although I do not weep,
I feel my bosom rack'd with agony:
I am a woman; nor make I parade
Of virile courage: but there doth remain
No path for me to take, save that of death.
If I had loved thee less, I might perchance
Have been the partner of thy flight to Carthage,
And, at the price of my renown, have gain'd
A short-lived vengeance, with thy troops, o'er Rome:
But I would not expose thee, for my sake,
To an unprofitable risk. The fall
Of Carthage is inevitable now:
Ill can a town discordant and corrupt
Cope with united and harmonious Rome.
I should have lived too long if I had seen,
On my account, my country overwhelm'd;
And thee, with it, hurl'd headlong to destruction.
Faithful remain to Rome; to mighty Scipio
Continue (as thou shouldst) a grateful friend;
To raise thee to great pow'r; to give thy virtue
An ample scope for action; all this now
My death can do, and nothing but my death.
Thy good, e'en more than mine, to this compels me . . .

Ma. Dost count me then so vile, as to expect
That I should venture to survive thy death?

So. I wish thee to excel me: and to prove
Thy greater excellence, thou shouldst survive me:
And in the name of thy renown, do I
Enjoin thee to do this. To thee would death
Be a disgrace; for to it love alone
Could prompt thee: life were a disgrace to me,
Since love alone could force me to endure it.
My death, thou know'st, is indispensable:
To me thou swaredst it; and such a gift
Would yet be grateful to me from thy hands:
Not by refusing it canst thou avert
My settled purpose. In this very place,
Before the camp, immovable and mute,
Yet three more days, which I shall add to this,
In which I have not slaked my burning thirst
E'en with a draught of water, will assure me

Perfect ascendency o'er Rome. But, ah!
Is it compassion in thee, thus to leave me
To a protracted agonizing death,
When thou hadst promised to procure me one
Both brief and dignified? . . . Fool that I was!
Trusting in thee alone, I hither came . . .
Ma. Thou on our death hast then resolved? . . .
So. On mine.
If madly thou, against my will express,
Turnest thy arms against thyself; now hear
A furious threat, and if thou dare, defy it:
I will be dragg'd a living slave to Rome,
And will ascribe to thee my infamy . . .
Ere the return of Scipio, I conjure thee,
Restore me, thou, to perfect liberty;
If thou art not forsworn.
Ma. What dost thou ask? . . .
O Heav'ns! . . . I cannot arm thee with my sword . . .
A doubtful stroke . . .
So. The sword requires, 'tis true,
A hand accustom'd to its management.
A bowl of speedy and effective poison
Were more adapted to my female courage.
I see not far from hence thy true attendant
Guludda; for thy sake he always bears it:
Call him; I am resolved.
Ma. —O day of woe!—
Give me that bowl, Guludda.—Now go thou,
Wait for me at my tent.—And is this, then,
Is this at once the first and latest pledge
Of my unbounded love, which thou wouldst wrest
By force from me? . . . Too certainly I see
That thou on no terms will consent to live;
And to a long and agonizing death
I cannot leave thee.—I will shed no tears, . . .
Because thou weepest not: behold, to thee
The deadly potion I present myself
With tearless eyes . . . But only on condition,
That I shall have my share in its contents . . .
So. Yes, thou shalt have it, as thou meritest.

Now of my lofty love at length thou'rt worthy.
Give me the bowl.
Ma. O Heav'ns! my hand and heart
Both tremble . . .
So. Why delay? Ere Scipio comes,
The deed must be accomplish'd . . .
Ma. Take the bowl.
Alas! What have I done? O agony! . . .
So. I've quaff'd it to the dregs: I see already
Scipio returns.
Ma. Dost thou deceive me thus?
I have a sword remaining yet; and I
Will follow thee.[1]

Scene VI.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA.

Sci. Ah, no! while I have breath . . .
Ma. Ah, traitor! In thy bosom I will then
Take vengeance for that immolated woman.
Sci. Behold my breast defenceless: I will loose,
That I may be thy victim, thy right hand;
Except for this, in vain thou wishest it.
So. O Masinissa, if thou dar'st, I hate thee . . .
Sci. Me, me alone, thy hand may immolate;
But, while I live, thou shalt not turn thy sword
'Gainst thy own breast.
Ma. —I am once more myself.—
Scipio, of all hast thou bereft me now;
E'en to my sense of honor.
So. Thankless one! . . .
Canst thou calumniate Scipio? He doth grant me,
As he has granted Syphax, a free death;
While p'rhaps he might have interdicted it:
By dint of force he wrests thee from the shame
Of an effeminate disgraceful death:
And darest thou, ungrateful one, alas,
Calumniate Scipio? Yield, ah, yield to Scipio!
He is at once thy brother, father, friend.

[1] He is about to stab himself; Scipio, forcing back his arm, prevents him.

Ma. Now leave me: thou in vain dost check my rage.
Death,...death...I yet...
So. Ah, Scipio...leave him not:
Drag him by force out of my sight elsewhere.
He was born great, and thy sublime example
To greatness may restore him: from the world,
From Rome, conceal his weakness...I...already...
Feel my tongue palsied,...and my blood congeal'd.—
To him I give not,...not to rend his heart,...
The last farewell.—Ah, drag him hence...I pray thee;...
And me...leave me to die,...as ought to die
Asdrubal's daughter...in the...Roman camp.
Ma. Ah!...By despair,...by grief...I am bereft...
Of all my strength...I scarce...can breathe,...much less...
Inflict...a blow...
Sci. Come: I will use towards thee
A friendly violence:[1] I will not leave thee...
Thy grief shall never let thee take thy life,
If with thyself thou do not slay thy Scipio.

[1] Dragging him forcibly towards the tents.

XVII.

THE FIRST BRUTUS.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS tragedy is based on the well-known story of Lucius Junius Brutus, whose father and brother were assassinated by order of Tarquinius Superbus, and who saved his own life by feigning idiotcy. He was brought up in the family of Tarquin (whose nephew he was) as a mere idiot, and surnamed Brutus. His real character and abilities were not found out till the time of the dreadful outrage on Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, by Sextus Tarquinius, and her heroic suicide, which led to the expulsion of the Tarquins, and the introduction of the Republic under Brutus and Collatinus, as joint consuls. The scene opens on the day of the death of Lucretia; and the other personages, besides Brutus and Collatinus, are the two sons of Brutus, named Titus and Tiberius; Mamilius, an envoy from, and emissary of, the expelled Tarquins; and Valerius, the representative and spokesman of the Senate. The People of Rome also appear amongst the characters, and take an active part in the proceedings. The death of Lucretia took place about 507 B.C.

The first Act discloses Brutus and Collatinus, the latter of whom is in despair at the death of Lucretia. Brutus encourages him by the hope that the catastrophe may prove the signal for the establishment of Roman liberty. The People enter, and Brutus makes an impassioned appeal to them. His harangue is strengthened by the introduction, at the bottom of the stage, of Lucretia's dead body, and he induces them, subject to the concurrence of the

Senate and patricians, to agree to the substitution of the Commonwealth to the race of Tarquins.

The second Act shows Brutus talking to his son Titus. His other son, Tiberius, appears, and describes an attack of Tarquin and his followers on one of the gates of Rome which he was guarding, and their repulse, followed by the appearance of an envoy, Mamilius, suing for an interview with Brutus and the Senate. Brutus orders his admission, and before his arrival addresses the People, Patricians, and Senate, with a view to ensure their joint action against the Tarquins. Valerius, on behalf of the Senate, promises their concurrence. They all agree to hear what Mamilius has to say. When the latter enters, he pretends that Tarquin reprobates the conduct of his son Sextus to Lucretia; but, on finding that none of his arguments in Tarquin's favor produce any effect, he ends by asking for the restoration of his private wealth, to which Brutus, with the People's concurrence, assents.

Mamilius, at the beginning of the third Act, succeeds in obtaining an interview with the two sons of Brutus, before he leaves Rome at the peremptory orders of Brutus. He cautiously acquaints them that a conspiracy, headed by many of the leading families of Rome, has been established to procure the return of the Tarquins, and produces a scroll containing their names, including those of some of their own near relations. He also tells them that several neighboring countries have joined them, and that the only object of subscribing the scroll is to obtain Tarquin's clemency in their favor when he is reinstated on the throne. By his artful appeals, he at length induces first Titus, and then Tiberius, to sign the scroll. At that moment Collatinus enters, attended by the lictors, and orders them to arrest the two youths and expel Mamilius from the city.

When the fourth Act opens, Brutus and Collatinus acquaint each other with the successes which they have gained in various skirmishes, and then Collatinus tells Brutus of the discovery of the conspiracy, and produces Mamilius's scroll, with all the names appended to it, including those of Titus and Tiberius. Brutus is heart-broken at the discovery, but announces his intention of

doing his duty to his country. The youths, guarded by lictors, are then introduced. They neither of them deny their guilt, though Titus says that he is responsible for his brother's signature. They allege that they only signed under the belief that the success of the conspiracy was ensured, and that Tarquin might be induced to be merciful to Brutus. The latter reproaches them for their conduct, for which they show themselves truly penitent. A terrible conflict takes place in the breast of Brutus between his love for his sons and his love for his country; but he orders them to be brought before assembled Rome, to receive their sentence.

Accordingly, the fifth Act sees every class collected in the Forum for the momentous trial, with Brutus and Collatinus in the rostrum. Collatinus details the discovery of the conspiracy. Valerius asks for the names of the traitors, and, after much hesitation, Collatinus gives him the scroll, from which he reads out in turn, to the amazement of his audience, the names in succession, ending with the sons of Brutus. The latter announces that the consuls will now do their duty, and orders the lictors to introduce all the criminals, who are accordingly brought in in chains, Titus and Tiberius being the last. Brutus proclaims them all sentenced to death. Titus exclaims that his brother is innocent, which Tiberius disclaims; Brutus will allow no difference in the guilt of any. Collatinus ineffectually pleads for mercy, which Brutus sternly refuses, and orders their execution, devolving, however, on Collatinus the actual duty of superintending the carrying out of the sentence. The curtain falls just as the lictors' axes are descending on the necks of the victims.

Alfieri calls attention to the fact that in this, as well as in his tragedy of *The Second Brutus* (see *post*), no women appear, whilst the People are embodied as a personage. He says that "this will appear, and perhaps is, little adapted to modern thought; but if Italy should ever again possess a people which has ears and tongue, it will probably be very grateful to me for having made it a speaking and effective personage at a time when it was

utterly mute and buried." He considers the subject of Junius Brutus to be one of the first sublimity, in which the most noble and lofty passion of man, the love of liberty, is contrasted with his most tender and strong passion, paternal love. The chief fault which he finds with this play is that the sons of Brutus, merely for having subscribed the conspirators' roll when deceived by Mamilius, neither appear, nor are, sufficiently guilty in the eyes of the audience, or in those of the people, or in those of Brutus himself, to deserve to be put to death by their own father. But he considers, on the whole, looking at the position of Brutus as a new consul, and the necessity of the times, that he has rightly depicted him.

Voltaire wrote a tragedy on the story of Brutus, as did Mdlle. Bernard, whose play under that title was performed with great success in 1647. It appears that Voltaire's play was the indirect cause of Alfieri's writing his. He mentions in his Life (Epoch iv. c. 16), that the Countess of Albany happened to say in a letter that she had been much pleased with a performance of this play. He felt himself instantly filled with a rabid and disdainful emulation both of heart and mind, and said to himself: "What! a Voltaire write Brutuses? I'll write Brutuses; I'll write two of them. Time shall show whether such subjects are better adapted for me, or for a Frenchman born a plebeian, who, for the space of more than seventy years, subscribed himself—*Voltaire, Gentleman in Ordinary to the King.*" The result was the production of both *The First Brutus* and *The Second Brutus.*

DEDICATION

TO

THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND FREE CITIZEN,

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

THE name of the deliverer of America alone can stand on the title-page of the tragedy of the deliverer of Rome.

To you, excellent and most rare citizen, I therefore dedicate it; without first hinting at even one of the many praises due to yourself, which I deem all comprehended in the sole mention of your name. Nor can this my slight allusion appear to you contaminated by adulation; since, as I do not know you personally, and we live separated from each other by the immense ocean, we have but too emphatically nothing in common between us, but the love of glory.

Happy are you, who have been able to build your glory on the sublime and eternal basis of love to your country, demonstrated by actions. I, though not born free, yet having abandoned in time my Lares, and for no other reason than that I might be able to write loftily of liberty, hope by this means at least to have proved what might have been my love for my country, if I had indeed fortunately belonged to one that deserved the name. In this single respect, I do not think myself wholly unworthy to mingle my name with yours.

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

PARIS, *December* 31, 1788.

THE FIRST BRUTUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BRUTUS.	VALERIUS.
COLLATINUS.	PEOPLE.
TITUS.	*Senators.*
TIBERIUS.	*Conspirators.*
MAMILIUS.	*Lictors.*

SCENE.—*The Forum in Rome.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

BRUTUS, COLLATINUS.

Col. Ah where, ah where, O Brutus, wouldst thou thus
Drag me by force? Restore to me at once
That sword of mine, which with belovèd blood
Is reeking yet . . . In my own breast . . .
Bru. Ah! first
This sword, now sacred, in the breast of others
Shall be immerged, I swear to thee.—Meanwhile
'Tis indispensable, that in this forum
Thy boundless sorrow, and my just revenge,
Burst unreservedly before the eyes
Of universal Rome.
Col. Ah, no! I will
Withdraw myself from ev'ry human eye.
To my unparallel'd calamity
All remedies are vain: the sword, that sword
Alone can put an end to my distress.

Bru. O Collatinus, a complete revenge
Would surely be some solace: and I swear
To thee, that that revenge thou shalt obtain.—
O! of a chaste and guiltless Roman woman
Thou sacred blood, to-day shalt thou cement
The edifice of Roman liberty.
Col. Ah! could my heart indulge a hope like this!
The hope, ere death, of universal vengeance . . .
Bru. Hope? be assured of it. At length, behold
The morn is dawning of the wish'd-for day:
To-day my lofty, long-projected plan
At length may gain a substance and a form.
Thou, from a wrong'd unhappy spouse, mayst now
Become the' avenging citizen: e'en thou
Shalt bless that guiltless blood: and then, if thou
Wilt give thy own, it will not be in vain
For a true country shed . . . A country, yes;
Which Brutus will to-day create with thee,
Or die with thee in such an enterprise.
Col. O! what a sacred name dost thou pronounce!
I, for a genuine country's sake alone,
Could now survive my immolated wife.
Bru. Ah! then resolve to live; co-operate
With me in this attempt. A God inspires me;
A God infuses ardor in my breast,
And thus exhorts me: "It belongs to thee,
"O Collatinus, and to thee, O Brutus,
"To give both life and liberty to Rome."
Col. Worthy of Brutus is thy lofty hope:
I should be vile, if I defeated it.
Or, from the impious Tarquins wholly rescued,
Our country shall from us new life obtain;
Or we (but first revenged) with her will fall.
Bru. Whether enslaved or free, we now shall fall
Illustrious and revenged. My dreadful oath
P'rhaps thou hast not well heard; the oath I utter'd,
When from Lucretia's palpitating heart
The dagger I dislodged which still I grasp.
Deaf from thy mighty grief, thou, in thy house,
Scarce heardest it; here once more wilt thou hear it,
From my own lips, upon the lifeless corpse

Of thy unhappy immolated wife,
And in the presence of assembled Rome,
More strenuously, more solemnly renew'd.—
Already, with the rising sun, the forum
With apprehensive citizens is fill'd;
Already, by Valerius' means, the cry
Amongst the multitude is spread abroad
Of that most terrible catastrophe:
More the effect will be upon their hearts,
When they behold the chaste and beauteous lady
With her own hands destroy'd. In their fierce wrath,
As much as in my own, shall I confide.—
But more than ev'ry man shouldst thou be present:
Thine eyes from the distracting spectacle
Thou mayst avert; to thy affliction this
May be allow'd: yet here shouldst thou remain:
E'en more than my impassion'd words, thy mute
And boundless grief is fitted to excite
Indignant pity in the crowd oppress'd . . .

Col. O Brutus! the divinity which speaks
In thee, to lofty and ferocious wrath
Hath changed my grief already. The last words
Of the magnanimous Lucretia, seem,
In a more awful and impressive sound,
To echo in my ears, and smite my heart.
Can I be less courageous to avenge her,
Than she herself has been to take her life?
In the accursèd Tarquins' blood alone
Can I wash out the stigma of the name,
Common to me and them.

Bru. Ah! I too spring
From their impure and arbitrary blood:
But, Rome shall be convinced that I'm her son,
Not of the Tarquins' sister: and as far
As blood not Roman desecrates my veins,
I swear to change it all, by shedding it
For my belovèd country.—But, behold,
The multitude increases: hitherward
Numbers advance: now is the time to speak.

Scene II.

BRUTUS, COLLATINUS, PEOPLE.

Bru. Romans, to me, to me, O Romans, come:
Great things have I to say to you.
People. O Brutus,
Can that indeed which we have heard be true? . . .
Bru. Behold: this is the dagger, reeking yet,
Warm with the guiltless blood of a most chaste
And Roman woman, slain by her own hands.
Behold her husband; he is mute, and weeps,
And shudders. Still he lives, but lives alone
For vengeance, till he sees that impious Sextus,
That sacrilegious ravisher and tyrant,
To pieces torn by your indignant hands.
And I live too; but only till the day,
When, wholly disencumber'd of the Tarquins,
I see Rome free once more.
People. O most unheard-of,
Calamitous catastrophe! . . .
Bru. I see
That all of you regard the hapless spouse
With weeping eyes, by stupor petrified.
Yes, Romans, look at him; ah, see in him,
Ye brothers, fathers, and ye husbands, see
Your infamy reflected. Thus reduced,
Death on himself he cannot now inflict;
Nor can he life endure, if unavenged . . .
But cease ye, as inopportune and vain,
Your stupor, and your tears.—O Romans, tow'rds me,
Turn tow'rds me, Romans, your ferocious looks:
P'rhaps from my eyes, with liberty all-burning,
Ye may collect some animating spark,
Which may inflame you with its fost'ring heat.
I Junius Brutus am; whom long ye deem'd,
Since I so feign'd myself, bereft of reason:
And such I feign'd myself, since, doom'd to live
The slave of tyrants, I indulged a hope
One day to rescue, by a shock of vengeance,
Myself and Rome from their ferocious claws.
At length the day, predestined by the gods,

The hour, for my exalted scheme is come.
From this time forth 'tis in your pow'r to rise
From slaves (for such ye were) to men. I ask
Alone to die for you; so that I die
The first free man and citizen in Rome.
People. What do we hear? What majesty, what force,
Breathe in his words! . . . But we, O Heav'ns! are pow'rless;
Can we confront arm'd and ferocious tyrants? . . .
Bru. Ye pow'rless, ye? What is it that ye say?
What? do ye then so little know yourselves?
The breast of each already was inflamed
With just and inextinguishable hate
Against the impious Tarquins: now, e'en now,
Ye shall behold before your eyes display'd
The last, most execrable, fatal proof,
Of their flagitious arbitrary pow'r.
To-day to your exalted rage, the rage
Of Collatinus, and my own, shall be
A guide, an impulse, a pervading spirit.
Ye have resolved on liberty; and ye
Deem yourselves pow'rless? and do ye esteem
The tyrants arm'd? what force have they, what arms?
The arms, the force of Romans. Who is there,
What Roman is there, would not sooner die,
Than here, or in the camp, for Rome's oppressors,
Equip himself with arms?—By my advice,
Lucretius, with his daughter's blood besprinkled,
Hath to the camp repair'd: this very moment,
By the brave men besieging hostile Ardea,
Hath he been seen and heard: and certainly,
In seeing him, and hearing him, those men
Have turn'd their arms against the guilty tyrants,
Or swift in our defence, abandoning
Their impious banners, hitherward they fly.
The honor of the earliest enterprise
Against the tyrants, citizens, would ye
Consent indeed to yield to other men?
People. O, with what just and lofty hardihood
Dost thou inflame our breasts!—What can we fear,
If all have the same will?

Col. Your noble rage,
Your gen'rous indignation, thoroughly
Recall me back to life. I nothing can
Express ... to you, ... for tears ... forbid ... my speech ...
My Roman sword shall speak on my behalf:
I first unsheathe it; and to earth I cast,
Irrevocably cast, the useless scabbard.
O sword, I swear to plunge thee in the breast
Of kings, or in my own. O husbands, fathers,
Be ye the first to follow me! ... But ah!
What spectacle is this! ...[1]
People. Atrocious sight!
Behold the murder'd lady in the forum ...
Bru. Yes, Romans; fix, (if ye have pow'r to do it,)
Fix on that immolated form your eyes.
That mute fair form, that dreadful gen'rous wound,
That pure and sacred blood, ah! all exclaim:
"To-day resolve on liberty, or ye
"Are doom'd to death. Nought else remains."
People. All, all,
Yes, free we all of us will be, or dead.
Bru. Then listen now to Brutus.—That same dagger,
Which from her dying side he lately drew,
Above that innocent illustrious woman
Brutus now lifts: and to all Rome he swears
That which first on her dying form itself
He swore already.—While I wear a sword,
While vital air I breathe, in Rome henceforth
No Tarquin e'er shall put his foot; I swear it:
Nor the abominable name of king,
Nor the authority, shall any man
Ever again possess.—May the just gods
Annihilate him here, if Brutus is not
Lofty and true of heart.—I further swear,
Many as Rome's inhabitants may be,
To make them equal, free, and citizens;
Myself a citizen, and nothing more:
The laws alone shall have authority,
And I will be the first to yield them homage.

[1] In the farther part of the stage the body of Lucretia is seen, followed by a great multitude.

People. The laws, the laws alone: we with one voice
To thine our oaths unite. And be a fate,
Worse than the fate of Collatinus, ours,
If we are ever perjured.
Bru. These, these are
True Roman accents. Tyranny and tyrants,
At your accordant hearty will alone,
All, all have vanish'd. Nothing now is needful,
Except to close the city gates against them;
Since fate, to us propitious, had already
Sequester'd them from Rome.
People. But ye meanwhile
Will be to us our consuls and our fathers.
Ye to us wisdom, we our arms to you,
Our swords, our hearts, will lend...
Bru. In your august
And sacred presence, on each lofty cause,
We always will deliberate: there cannot
From the collected people's majesty
Be any thing conceal'd. But it is just,
That the patricians and the senate bear
A part in ev'ry thing. At the new tidings
They are not all assembled here: enough
(Alas! too much) the iron rod of pow'r
Has smitten them with terror: now yourselves
To the sublime contention of great deeds
Shall summon them. Here then we will unite,
Patricians and plebeians: and by us
Freedom a stable basis shall receive.
People. From this day forth shall we begin to live.

ACT II.

Scene I.

BRUTUS, TITUS.

Tit. All the patricians were invited, father,
To the august assembly, as thou badest.
The fourth hour now approaches; thou wilt have

The whole of Rome subservient to thy nod.
It well-nigh doth bereave me of my reason
To see thee almost lord of Rome...
Bru. Thou see'st me
Lord of myself, and not of Rome, O Titus:
Nor shall ye have a lord in any shape
In Rome henceforward. This by her I swear:
I, who till now was a vile slave. O sons,
Ye saw me such, while with the tyrant's children
I educated you for servitude
In a corrupted court. Alas! I could not
Sow in your hearts the seeds of liberty,
A trembling and degraded father: hence
Ye are a cause, ye the most special cause,
Why I should glory in recover'd freedom.
My independent vigorous example
Will instigate you more to excellence,
Than my anterior slav'ry did to baseness.
Contented for my country shall I die
That day when I in Rome shall leave my sons
Amongst the number of free citizens.
Tit. Father, there needed to thy lofty heart,
Whose lustre always broke upon thy sons,
A field no less magnificent for action
Than that which fortune opens to thee now.
Ah, might we in the noble enterprise
Assist thee! But the obstacles are many,
And they are terrible. The multitude
Is in itself inconstant: to the Tarquins
What manifold resources yet remain!...
Bru. Were there no obstacles existing yet,
The enterprise would easy be, and thence
Unworthy Brutus: but if Brutus fear'd them,
He were unworthy to accomplish it.—
Join to thy father's stern, immutable,
Lofty resolve, thy youthful vehemence;
Thus, son at once of Brutus and of Rome,
Shalt thou be, Titus.—But thy brother comes...
Hear we what news he brings.

SCENE II.

TIBERIUS, TITUS, BRUTUS.

Tib. Belovèd father,
Never could I have met thee in the forum
More opportunely. Wild with joy thou see'st me:
I sought for thee.—From too much haste all-breathless
Am I: with impulses ne'er felt before,
I am at once transported and oppress'd.
I have just seen the execrable Tarquins;
And trembled not ...
Tit. What happen'd?
Bru. Where?...
Tib. I am
By my own eyes persuaded that the tyrant
Is of all men the least. The haughty king,
With impious Sextus, scarce had heard that Rome
Was in rebellion, when he left the camp;
And with a chosen escort tow'rds the city
Rush'd at full speed: and here were they arrived
At the Carmental gate...
Tit. Precisely there
Where thou wert sentinel.
Tib. O happy I!
I first against the tyrants, I the first
My sword unsheathed.—The iron gate was closed,
And guarded: to defend its outer side,
I, with some twenty Romans, all in saddle,
A careful watch maintain'd around. Behold,
With cries, with howlings, and with menaces,
The troop, twice ours in number, rush'd against us.
To hear, to see them, and to recognize them,
To fall upon them with our weapons, seem'd
The work of but an instant. In ourselves
There was a strength and rage unlike to theirs:
Tyrants, they thought that they were meeting slaves:
But soon they learn'd that liberty and death,
Like twin-born instincts, hover'd round our swords.
Already ten or more had we destroy'd;
The residue, the tyrant first of these,
Betook themselves to flight. Upon their heels

Fiercely and long we press'd; but press'd in vain;
Fear gave them wings. I afterwards return'd
To my appointed post beside the gate;
And, warm yet with the victory, come swiftly
To thee to tell it.

Bru. Trifling though it be,
Such sample of our prowess should be deem'd
An omen of prosperity to Rome.
Fain would I in that fray have borne a part;
For nothing so intensely do I covet,
As to confront them in the strife of blood.
O! wherefore in the forum and the camp
Cannot I tongue, and intellect, and sword,
All, all at once exert? But, with such sons,
I can with ease be many things at once.

Tib. Still have I more to tell thee. When to flight
I had these miscreants driv'n, as I return'd
Towards the walls, the sound of hoofs I heard
Behind, advancing on our homeward path;
Backward I look'd, and lo! there came towards us
A single horseman from the tyrant's train:
His right hand weaponless he raised; no sword
Guarded his side; an olive-branch he held
In his left hand; he call'd, and beckon'd to me:
I halted, he advanced; the messenger
Of peace, in supplicating tones he ask'd
Admission into Rome. To offer now
Conditions and apologies, he comes
To Brutus and the senate . . .

Bru. Say, the people:
For Brutus is a portion of the people,
Or he is nothing. And the herald was? . . .

Tib. Mamilius: strict injunctions to my troops
Without the gates I gave to guard him well;
I came to know what must be done with him.

Bru. He comes at the right time. This messenger
Could not have chosen, to present himself,
A day more solemn or more opportune.
Go; to the gate return thou, seek him, with thee
Quickly conduct him hither. If he dare,
Here shall he speak to universal Rome:

And here, an answer not of Rome unworthy
He will, I hope, receive.
Tib. To him I fly.

Scene III.

BRUTUS, TITUS.

Bru. Meanwhile go thou to meet the senators;
See in the forum that they yield to them
The most conspicuous places. Even now
The concourse of the multitude increases;
And many of the senators I see;
Go hence; O Titus, go without delay.

Scene IV.

BRUTUS, PEOPLE, SENATORS, AND PATRICIANS, *who place themselves successively in the Forum.*

Bru. —O thou supreme discerner of those thoughts
Which lurk most privily in human breasts;
Thou who dost see and dost inflame my heart;
Rome's great protector, everlasting Jove;
Give me, I pray thee, language, sense, and spirit
To the great cause proportion'd . . . Yes, O Jove,
This wilt thou do; if it be true that thou
Hast chosen me to be the instrument
Of liberty, thy true and greatest blessing.

Scene V.

BRUTUS, *having mounted the rostrum*, VALERIUS, TITUS, PEOPLE, SENATORS, PATRICIANS.

Bru. I come, O fellow-citizens, to make
To you a strict confession of my deeds.
With one consent ye have appointed me
With Collatinus to a dignity
Without a precedent in Rome: the lictors,
The fasces, and the axes (hitherto
Regal insignia) ye have now been pleased
To join to our elective annual office.
Yet not for this hath the malignant taint

Of mad ambition crept into my heart:
With honors, no, (though yours are genuine ones,)
I'm not transported: but with liberty;
With love for Rome; and with implacable,
Fierce, and eternal hatred for the Tarquins.
These are my sole pretensions; and may each
Of you in such a noble strife excel me;
I have no wish beyond.

People. Thy dignified
And manly looks, O Brutus, thy frank speech,
All, all announce in thee to us the father
Of Rome and of the Romans.

Bru. O my sons,
My genuine sons, (since with the name of father
Ye have been pleased to honor me,) I hope
Shortly to show you, by no doubtful proofs,
That beyond all, beyond myself, I love you.—
My colleague, arm'd, has from the city gone,
With many heroes, to the camp, to meet
And safely to collect those who with justice
Have left the standard of our vile oppressors.
People, patricians, knights, and senators,
I all of you assemble in the forum;
Since the great cause of all I wish to treat
Before you all convened. Now ev'ry Roman
Is so essentially a part of Rome,
That nothing but his own degen'racy
Can from her solemn meetings banish him.—
Noble patricians; ye, the scanty remnant,
Uninjured by the devastating sword
Of the despotic king; and ye, their flower,
O senators; ye will not be averse
To mingle with a free and manly people?
Ah! no: ye are too lofty. All around,
Far as I cast my eyes, I see all Romans;
And there are none of them unworthy you,
Since there among us are no longer kings.—
Trembling and insecure, kings hitherto
Our lips have seal'd: nor was there left for us
Any alternative, except to load
Ourselves with infamy, and give assent

To their iniquitous flagitious laws;
Or, if our courage led us to oppose
Ourselves to them in vain, to be the first
To fall the luckless victims of their rage.
Va. Brutus, thy words are true.—I, in the name
Of all the senators, now speak to Rome.—
Too true indeed are they! We, a long time
On Rome's obscurest citizens reduced
To look with envy; more than any culprit
Forced to despise ourselves; why use more words?
Besides our portion in the common load
Of execrable servitude, compell'd
In the dark mysteries of tyranny
To take a part; we, yes, we sunk ourselves
Below the lowest people; and we were so:
Nor to the multitude could any of us
Hope to seem guiltless, save the many slain
By the vile royal axe. Nought else remains
To us to-day, then, but to reunite
Our heartiest efforts with the noble people;
Nor otherwise to covet to surpass them,
Except in hate of kings. This sacred hate
Will be the base of Rome, sublime, eternal.
We then, yes, we, by the infernal gods,
By our own blood, and by our children's blood,
Swear it ferociously, with one accord.
People. O noble! O magnanimous! O ye
Alone now worthy to surpass us! We
Gladly accept the noble strife of virtue.
What people now will undertake to cope,
Much less the vanquish'd execrable kings,
(Already vanquish'd by their turpitude,)
With us, who Romans are and citizens?
Bru. Immortal contest! superhuman words! . . .
I die contented: I, for once at least,
Have utter'd accents worthy of a Roman;
And have indeed with these my ears once heard
True Roman eloquence.—Since Rome so fully
Entrusts herself to us for her defence,
Without her walls I instantly depart;
And day by day to you of all our deeds

My colleague or myself will give account;
Until, our arms laid down, in perfect peace
Ye give a stable government to Rome.
People. 'Tis needful first to utterly discomfit,
Defeat, and slay the tyrants.
Bru. I, in this,
And nothing else, will be your chief.—Be pleased
Briefly to hear a messenger of theirs:
He, in their name, solicits to address you.
Would ye believe it? Tarquin, and with him
The villain Sextus, and a few more, dared
Erewhile to make incursion with full speed
Almost to Rome; and thought to come to us
As to a timid flock; vain-glorious fools!
But they in this were much deceived; my son
Tiberius has deprived me of the honor
Of first attacking them. The miscreants soon
Betook themselves from him by sudden flight:
Descending then from force to art, they dare
To send to you, as an ambassador,
Mamilius. What may be the terms unworthy,
Will ye be pleased to hear?
People. There are between us
No other terms, except their death or ours.
Bru. This let him hear, then, and report.
People. To us
Let this base herald come, hear Rome's opinions,
And bear them back to him who sent him hither.

Scene VI.

BRUTUS, TITUS, TIBERIUS, MAMILIUS, VALERIUS, PEOPLE, SENATORS, PATRICIANS.

Bru. Mamilius, come, advance; examine well
By whom thou art surrounded. In the court
Of Tarquin thou, effeminately nursed,
Hast never yet seen Rome: this, this is she.
Behold her undisguised, and patiently
Prepared to hear thy message. Now proceed.
Ma. . . . O Brutus, with no unimportant words
Was I commission'd to bespeak thy hearing:

But, in this vast assembly, . . . to divulge . . .
Without premeditation . . .
Bru. Audibly
Address thyself to all; and not to me.
Sublime announcer of the will of kings,
Divulge it to the senate, to the people:
Brutus will also hear thee with the rest.
People. Speak, speak to all; and thou of all shalt hear,
In a few words, the answer, from the mouth
Of our great consul Brutus. See in him
Our true interpreter, the only one
Worthy to be the organ of our thoughts.
Make haste, proceed; and brief be thy harangue:
Frank and explicit shall our answer be.
Bru. Heard'st thou?
Ma. I tremble.—Tarquin, king . . .
People. Not king
Of Rome.
Ma. —Of Rome, the friend and father, Tarquin . . .
People. He is the wicked father of that Sextus,
And not of us . . .
Bru. Whate'er his words may be,
May ye be pleased to hear him in complete
Dignified silence.
Ma. —To yourselves erewhile
Came Tarquin, at the earliest news that Rome
Rebell'd; almost defenceless and alone,
Fully relying on his innocence,
And on his people's loyalty, he came:
But armèd men repell'd him. Hence he sent me,
A messenger of peace; and by my means
Enquires, what is the crime, whence in your sight
So guilty, that to-day he's doom'd to lose
The throne of Rome, once his by your consent . . .
People O rage! Incredible audacity!
Slain is Lucretia, and he asks the crime? . . .
Ma. That was the guilt of Sextus, not his own . . .
Tib. And Sextus also at his father's side
Erewhile repair'd to Rome: and had they not
Both been compell'd to save their lives by flight,
Here had ye seen him now.

People. Ah, why did ye
Frustrate their wish to gain access to Rome?
Already had we torn their scatter'd limbs
In thousand thousand pieces.
Ma. —It is true,
Sextus was also with his father there:
But Tarquin, more a monarch than a father,
Thither enticed his son, to subject him
To a retributory punishment.
Bru. This is an impudent unmanly lie;
And robs me utterly of self-control.
If, to preserve his throne, the guilty father
Offer'd to sacrifice his guilty son,
Should we consent to it? The murder'd woman
Hath brought, 'tis true, our suff'rance to a crisis:
But, without this, is not the haughty father,
The mother, and the whole opprobrious race
Of impure Sextus, stain'd with thousand crimes?
Servius, that perfect king, and Tullia's father,
Was by his wicked son-in-law transfix'd;
Tullia, detested monster, mounts the throne,
Trampling beneath her horses' feet the corpse
Of her slain father: afterwards their reign
By bloodshed and oppression was distinguish'd;
The senators and citizens destroy'd;
And those not murder'd, cruelly despoil'd;
Dragg'd from the gen'rous servitude of Mars,
(To which alone are Roman heroes born,)
Vilely to hollow and to pile whole quarries,
Which will remain eternal monument
Both of their bondage and of regal pride:
And all their manifold iniquities: . . .
When, when should I conclude my narrative,
If one by one I should enumerate
The Tarquins' trespasses? Lucretia's death
Was last of these; and their impiety,
And our endurance, terminate with this.
People. This is the last; Rome swears it is the last . . .
Va. This we all swear: we all will fall down dead,
Ere impious Tarquin shall return to Rome.
Bru. —Mamilius, what? thou art confused and mute?

Thou mightest clearly have foreseen the answer.
Go, then; repeat it to thy lord, since thou
Hadst rather be a slave, than be a man.
Ma. —I might urge many arguments; . . . but, none . . .
People. No; 'twixt a tyrant king and suff'ring people,
There are no arguments, save those of arms.
Heard he indeed our arguments and prayers,
When on the throne he sat, puff'd up with pride,
And steel'd with cruelty? Did he not then
Laugh at our tears, and scoff at our complaints?
Ma. —Then, may another king with milder sway
More satisfy your hearts.—My whole discourse
I now shall terminate in one request.—
Tarquin in Rome has left abundant wealth;
Indisputably his: would it be just
That ye, besides his honor, throne, and country,
Should rob him of his substance?
People. —Answer this,
Brutus, for us.
Bru. His country is not taken
From Tarquin by the Romans: kings have not
A country ever; nor deserve they one:
They never were, nor are of Roman blood.
They have themselves defrauded of their honor
For a long time. Henceforth, by our decree,
The monarch and the monarchy from Rome
Are banish'd everlastingly; the throne
Is, by the flames, consumed to ashes vile;
Nor is a trace remaining of it now.
'Tis true, in part, that, when they came to Rome,
Their foreign innovating ancestors
Infamous treasures brought, which, afterwards
Insidiously dispersed, at first conduced
To vitiate our simple ancient customs;
Their wealth was afterwards the fruit of rapine,
And was augmented by our sweat and blood:
From whence the Romans equitably might
Resume it for themselves.—But Rome esteems
The Tarquins only worthy to enjoy it;
And gives it all to them.
People. O heart sublime!

Rome's tutelary genius surely now
In Brutus speaks. Be his decree fulfill'd . . .
Let Tarquin have this guilty wealth . . .
Bru. With gold
May vice and every regal filthiness
Depart.—Go hence, Mamilius; and collect
Their treasures with all possible dispatch:
My sons shall be to thee in this thy task,
Both guardians and assistants. Go ye with him.

Scene VII.

BRUTUS, PEOPLE, VALERIUS, SENATORS, PATRICIANS.

Bru. Methinks, O citizens, 'tis now high time
The forum to abandon; to repair
Arm'd to the camp. Let us, let us behold
If Tarquin dare to challenge with his sword
Another answer from us.
People. Brutus, see
Thy chosen followers are all accoutred.
Bru. Let us then go to victory or death.

ACT III.

Scene I.

TIBERIUS, MAMILIUS.

Tib. Mamilius, come, I must obey my father:
This moment hath he sent to me a message,
Which peremptorily insists on this:
Thou with the setting sun must go from Rome.
Ma. O! how can he presume to abrogate
That which himself with universal Rome
Granted to me this morning? . . .
Tib. He doth only
Forbid thy longer tarrying here: ere long
The hoarded wealth, solicited and granted,
Shall follow thee outside the gates. Let's go . . .

Ma. Say, in what manner am I authorized
To greet unhappy Aruns in thy name?
Tib. Tell him, . . . that he alone deserveth not
To be a son of Tarquin; and that I,
Still mindful of our friendship, feel no small
Compassion for his fate. For him I can
Do nothing . . .
Ma. For thyself, thou canst do much.
Tib. What dost thou mean?
Ma. That, if compassion yet
Find an admission in thy youthful breast,
Thou for thyself, and for thy friends, shouldst feel it.
Tib. What sayest thou?
Ma. That Aruns' pity soon
May profit thee far more than thine will him.
Dangers and obstacles thou seeest not,
Intoxicate with freedom: but canst thou
Think that they ever can be permanent,
These innovating, undigested plans,
This mere ideal of a government?
Tib. I easily believe, since thou'rt a slave,
That freedom seems impossible to thee.
But the unanimous consent of Rome . . .
Ma. The genuine wishes of another Rome
Have I since heard: thou dost excite my pity;
Thou, who with thy infatuated father
Dost rush towards the fatal precipice.—
But, Titus comes to join us. Ah! perchance,
Thy brother may himself expose to thee,
Better than I, the dubious state of things.

SCENE II.

TITUS, MAMILIUS, TIBERIUS.

Tit. I came in quest of thee; fain would I speak . . .
Tib. I cannot hear thee now.
Ma. Immediately
He ought to drag me forth from Rome: to this
Your father's absolute command compels him.—
How much I pity you, O youths! . . .
Tib. Meanwhile

Let us depart.—I presently return
To listen to thee, Titus.
Tit. And this man,
What would he say?
Ma. Let us depart: perchance
I may, as we proceed, communicate
That which thy brother now would tell thee.
Tit. Stop.
To learn from thee . . .
Ma. More than thou know'st, I'll tell thee.
It all depends on me: I can, I only,
Deliver you from mighty perils . . .
Tib. Thou
Artfully speak'st . . .
Tit. And what depends on thee?
Ma. Tiberius, Titus, and your Brutus too,
And Collatinus, and e'en Rome herself.
Tib. Vain-glorious fool! what sayest thou?
Tit. I know
The guilty hope . . .
Ma. Hope? it is certainty.
Already a conspiracy is form'd
In favor of the Tarquins, and complete:
Nor are the' Aquilii the sole confed'rates,
As thou dost think, O Titus: with these are
The Martii, Octavii, and others,
Hundreds and hundreds of patrician rank;
And many more, consummately esteem'd
Among the very people . . .
Tib. Heav'ns! what hear I? . . .
Tit. 'Tis true, too true in part; there is in Rome
A spirit of sedition. Numbers met
In conference with the Aquilii:
As friend and relative, I sought their dwelling,
And from the meeting was alone excluded.
A strong suspicion thence arose in me . . .
Ma. I was conferring with the' Aquilii,
While thou wast thus excluded: finally,
So strong, so certain, and so well assured
Is the conspiracy, that I fear not
To make it known to you.

Tib. Perfidious . . .
Tit. There
Hast thou employ'd thy abject arts . . .
Ma. Hear, hear,
Ye sons of Brutus, that which I would say.
Had it been my contrivance thus to form
So quickly such a formidable plot,
I had not been on this account perfidious.
For the most just and elevated cause
Of a legitimate king, had I attempted
To turn to equity and penitence
His subjects, to their sev'ral duties blind,
Seduced from truth; this too would not have been
Perfidious. But, I neither ought, nor will,
Take to myself the honor of a deed,
Which cost me neither labor nor design.
Scarce was the popular conventicle
Dissolved, ere I clandestinely received
An invitation to the secret council.
Here with amazement was I overwhelm'd,
Such and so many, and such ardent friends
Of the expell'd, calumniated Tarquins
To see united: emulously all
They promised me far more than I from them
Had ventured to demand. They all agreed
For Sextus and no other, to demand
The punishment he merited. And Sextus
Is culpable; and, even more than Rome,
His father 'gainst him is incensed; and swears
On him a perfect vengeance. I made known
To them this resolution of the king:
Then all with one voice cried: "We will lay down
Our lives to reinstate him on the throne."
This of the noblest and best part of Rome,
This was the cry.—Now ye may clearly see,
From this account, that artifice is not
Embosom'd in me: I reveal the whole,
To save you; and, to save at the same time,
If he consent to it, your sire himself.
Tib. —Since thou already know'st so much, I deem
That it were best, till the return of Brutus,

To urge thy stay in Rome. I now perceive
Why Brutus sent so expeditiously
The order to expel thee; but, alas!
It came to me too late . . .
Tit. Thou thinkest justly:
Meanwhile do thou watch over him with care.
The safest place to keep him, seems to me
The house of the Vitellii, our cousins:
I to the camp will fly, to expedite
My sire's return from thence.
Ma. Since I esteem'd
Your natures courteous, I have spoken frankly;
Will it now please you to betray me? Do it:
Further, if it please Brutus to infringe
The sacred rights of hospitality,
Let him, in my case, do it: but already
So far have matters gone, that benefit,
In consequence of aught that I may suffer,
Cannot accrue to Brutus, or yourselves.
Already far beyond what ye suspect
Is the conspiracy advanced. E'en now
Your father and his colleague, and the dregs
Of the vile populace alone remain
The nerve and sinew of rebellion's cause.
Go to thy father, Titus, if thou wilt;
The more thou dost accelerate his coming,
So much the more dost thou accelerate
His evil fate.—And thou, deposit me
Quickly with the Vitellii. Far safer
I in their custody shall be, than thou.
Tib. What vile suspicion wouldst thou thus? . . .
Ma. I speak
Not from suspicion, but from certainty.
For even the Vitellii themselves,
The four true brothers of your mother, they,
As much by amity to Brutus bound
As by the ties of blood, e'en they desire
To reinstate Tarquinius on the throne.
Tit. O Heav'ns! . . .
Tib. This is a lie . . .
Ma. The scroll, in which,

Sign'd by themselves, the most illustrious names
Of the conspirators are all inscribed,
Will this, perchance, convince you?—Look at it:
Beneath the names of the Aquilii,
Read ye their four names written.
Tib. Dreadful sight!
Tit. O Heav'ns! what will become, then, of my father? . . .
Tib. O day of sorrow! O devoted Rome! . . .
Ma. —Nor fondly dream ye, since this scroll I bear,
That the success of the conspiracy
On my departure hangs. Clandestinely
Already has a faithful messenger
Of mine from Rome departed; and to Tarquin
Already is the project fully known.
The' Etrurians to his standard flock in numbers;
The pow'rful king of Clusium takes his part;
Tarquinii and Veii, all Etruria,
All Rome, except the consuls and yourselves.
This scroll is written with no other purpose,
Than to obtain the clemency of Tarquin
In favor of the names therein inscribed.
Surrender me, and with myself this scroll,
Into your father's hands: and ye perchance
May for awhile cause your relations' blood
To flow in rivers; but, or soon or late,
Your father ye condemn to certain death:
And Tarquin then will still be king in Rome.
Tit. Ah! I too clearly did anticipate
What now I hear. I said it to my father . . .
Tib. Alas! we're driven to a fearful strait.
What should we do? Ah! speak . . .
Tit. A dreadful danger
Threatens our father . . .
Tib. And still greater Rome . . .
Ma. Wherefore this secret conference prolong?
I am prepared for all, whether ye choose
To drag me forth from Rome, or, bound with chains,
To keep me there a captive: but, if love,
True love for Rome, your father, and yourselves,
Dwells in your bosoms, ye at once will save

Yourselves, your father, and your native Rome.
All this is in your pow'r.
Tit. How? . . .
Tib. What dost hope? . . .
Ma. Add but your names with your own hands to these,
And all will then be safe.
Tib. O Heav'ns! shall we
Our country and our father thus betray? . . .
Ma. Your honor and your tutelary gods,
Your country and your father ye betray'd,
When ye presumed against your lawful king
Rebelliously to rise. Yet had your fate
Granted a happy issue to your scheme,
Ye had, at least, some recompense obtain'd
For this your treachery: but since ye see
That prospect vanish'd, (I again repeat it,)
With further perseverance ye will drag,
And vainly drag, to dire calamity
Your country, and your father, and yourselves.
Tit. But, tell me; if we add our names to these,
Where will it lead? to what are pledged the others?
Ma. To things most just. First, from the king's own lips
To hear his own defence; to make yourselves,
In the king's presence, judges of the late
And dreadful crime of his most wicked son;
To see him punish'd: and to reinstate,
Beneath a less harsh rule, in peace and splendor
Your native country . . . Ah! by doing this,
Ye both will hear yourselves beyond all others
Hail'd as the true deliv'rers of the state;
Provided that 'twixt Brutus and Tarquinius
Ye be the instruments of lasting friendship;
The only means of placing Rome in safety.
Tit. Assuredly we might do this . . .
Tib. Reflect . . .
Who knows? . . . P'rhaps other means . . .
Tit. What other means
Remain now for us? The conspiracy
Too pow'rful is . . .
Tib. I'm younger than thyself;

In so important a concern I will not,
Nor can I, part myself from thee: too much
I've always loved thee: but I feel at heart
A dreadful presage . . .
Tit. Yet, the night approaches,
And neither Collatinus nor my father
Do I behold with their arm'd men return
To Rome: his messenger already is
To Tarquin gone: we are on all sides press'd:
At least it now behoves us for the present
To pacify the king . . .
Ma. 'Tis late; resolve:
'Tis vain this whispering apart from me.
Whether for my advantage ye decide
To operate, or (with more truth) for yours,
The swiftest now will be the best decision.
Resolve; behold the scroll. Rich with such names,
Ye'll make me speedily depart from Rome,
That peace to Rome may speedily return.
Tit. Heav'n I attest: it readeth my pure heart;
It knows that nothing but the good of others
To this compels me.
Tib. Heav'ns! what art thou doing? . . .
Tit. Behold my name.
Tib. —So be it, if thou wilt.—
Behold my name, too, O Mamilius, sign'd.
Ma. I go contented.
Tit. Do thou then conduct him;
While I . . .

Scene III.

LICTORS, COLLATINUS, *with a number of Soldiers;* TITUS, MAMILIUS, TIBERIUS.

Col. What do I see? Mamilius yet
In Rome?
Tib. O Heav'ns! . . .
Tit. O inauspicious meeting!
Col. And ye, have ye thus kept the absolute
And peremptory order of your father?—
But wherefore are ye agitated thus?
Wherefore thus mute?—Ah, Heav'n be praised! perchance

I yet arrive in time.—Advance, ye lictors:
Be Titus and Tiberius instantly
In fetters bound...
Tit. Ah! hear us...
Col. Rome, ere long,
Shall hear you, and the consul Brutus. Drag
To their paternal dwelling the two brothers;
And watch them there.
Tib. Ah, Titus!

Scene IV.

COLLATINUS, MAMILIUS, SOLDIERS.

Col. (*To the Soldiers.*) And do ye
Escort Mamilius through the gates...
Ma. I came
Under the public faith...
Col. Inviolate,
Under the public faith, by thee deserved not,
Thou shalt depart from hence.—Thou hearest, Quintus.

Scene V.

COLLATINUS.

Col. When will these dread misfortunes cease, O Heav'ns?...—
But I'm compell'd meanwhile, till Brutus comes,
To watch o'er all things with an iron heart.

ACT IV.

Scene I.

LICTORS, BRUTUS, SOLDIERS.

Bru. Heroic Romans, we have combated
Enough to-day for Rome. Let ev'ry man,
For the remainder of the half-spent night,
To his own family repair in peace.
And if the foe once more should have the daring
To turn their faces to the gates of Rome,
We to disperse them will again unite.

SCENE II.

COLLATINUS, BRUTUS, LICTORS, SOLDIERS.

Col. O Brutus, opportunely thou returnest.
Already, anxious at thy non-appearance,
I quitted Rome that I might meet thee sooner.
Bru. Late I return, but full of hope and joy.
I found it difficult within the walls
My heroes to collect; they closely press'd
A royal company in fierce attack,
Which, at first sight, made some display of valor.
They came from Ardea on the track of Tarquin,
Nor did they know that he had been repulsed:
P'rhaps in his flight he took some other road.
Into our hands they fell; they were already
Broken and scatter'd all, and many slain,
And the rest routed, ere the sun declined.
I scarcely afterwards restrain'd my men
Further, when night fell, from pursuing them.
Col. I also in my sally from the walls
Met with no mean success. I first, thou knowest,
Descended to the plain the other way:
Troop after troop, it was my fate to meet
Our home-returning and disbanded army,
Almost to the last man; they had in Ardea
Seceded from the standard of the tyrant.
O what exulting and unbounded cries
Of purest transport did the citizens
And soldiers raise to Heav'n, when thus they met!...
Guided by me, inside the walls of Rome
Are they assembled now; and there they watch
In her defence with eager emulation.
Bru. Treach'rous Mamilius doubtless was expell'd,
As I my sons commanded. Let us all
Then go to brief repose; we have, methinks,
Well purchased the indulgence. In the forum
To-morrow's dawn shall see us; for we ought
There, with the people, to confer at length
On things of loftiest consequence.
Col. —O Brutus!...
Yet stay a little while.—Command thy troops,

Yet keeping under arms, to draw aside:
I ought to speak with thee in private here.
Bru. And what?...
Col. The interests of Rome demand it;
I pray thee grant me this...
Bru. In double troop,
Wait for me at the entrance of the forum,
Ye soldiers.—Lictors, draw aside a little.
Col. —Ah, Brutus!... Thou wilt vainly, vainly seek,
Amid thy Lares, in this dreadful night,
Even a transient rest.
Bru. What wouldst thou tell me?...
O Heav'ns! why art thou troubled, anxious,...
trembling?...
Col. Trembling, yes, I for Brutus am; for Rome;
For all of us.—This morning thou, O Brutus,
Didst, with a kindly hand, to my profound
And recent wound at least the comfort give
Of vengeance and of hope: and I, alas!
Am forced to give thee, as a recompense,
A wound more fatal in thy heart, O Heav'ns!...
Why have I lived till now?... O desolate,
Distracted father! Thou art now compell'd,
From a bereaved and miserable husband
Tidings to hear, which in thy heart will fix
A mortal wound!... And yet, I cannot hide them;...
Nor am I able to delay the news.
Bru. Alas!... I shudder at thy words... But yet
Worse than the evil is its expectation.
Speak. I who hitherto in servitude
Have dragg'd a painful life, have long been used
To tremble always for my dearest treasures.
Private calamities, whate'er they be,
So that the liberties of Rome be safe,
I can endure to hear: speak.
Col. On thyself,
(But too emphatically!) on thyself
The liberties of Rome are now dependent;
But at a price so vast, that I almost...
O dreadful day!... I was the first who gave
Occasion for the lofty enterprise,

By a hard sacrifice; but to conclude it . . .
O Heav'ns! . . . 'tis indispensable that Brutus
Prepare to render to assembled Rome
A cruel, fierce, unparallel'd example
Of desp'rate fortitude.—Amid thy Lares,
(Wouldst thou believe it?) thou liv'st not in safety.
A potent, num'rous, fierce conspiracy
In Rome now rages.
Bru. I suspected it,
In hearing of the strenuous cabals
Of that vile wretch Mamilius; and in haste
I expedited to Tiberius hence
Orders express, before the hour of three,
To make him quit the city.
Col. When the sun
Down to the western hills had well-nigh sunk,
I found Mamilius still had linger'd here
With both thy sons.—It grieves me to repeat it;
But 'tis too true; and thou wert ill obey'd.
Bru. O what a conflict dost thou raise in me
Of fear and indignation! . . .
Col. Wretched Brutus! . . .
What wilt thou feel when the conspiracy
To thee I publish? . . . and when thou shalt hear
The names of the conspirators? . . . Then, first,
Among a number of thy nearest friends
And relatives, first the Vitellii
Are part and parcel of the treachery . . .
Bru. Alas! the brothers of my wife? . . .
Col. Who knows,
If also she be not seduced by them?
And, . . . then . . . thy sons . . . themselves? . . .
Bru. What do I hear? . . .
O Heav'ns! my blood in ev'ry vein doth freeze! . . .
My sons, conspirators? . . . It cannot be! . . .
Col. O Brutus! . . . were it otherwise!—And I,
At first, would not believe it: afterwards
My eyes compell'd me to implicit faith.—
This is a paper fatal to our peace:
Read it.
Bru. . . . My trembling heart is chill'd with fear.

What do I here behold? Name after name,
In their own hand: first the Aquilii,
Then the Vitellii; and Martii;
And others after others; . . . and, at last, . . .
Titus! Tiberius! . . . Ah! this is enough . . .
No more; . . . I've seen too much.—Unhappy Brutus! . . .
Thou art no more a father . . . —But, thou'rt yet
Consul, no less than citizen, of Rome.—
Lictors, ho! Titus, and Tiberius, quick,
Let them be brought before me.
Col. Ah! O Brutus,
It had been better hadst thou suffer'd me
To die alone . . .
Bru. How fell into thy hands
This dreadful paper?
Col. I myself beheld it,
Though swiftly he conceal'd it, in the hands
Of infamous Mamilius I beheld it:
Thence I, in his expulsion from the city,
Constrain'd him to surrender it. Meanwhile,
In thy own dwelling, to a faithful guard,
Thy sons had I committed; in an instant
'Gainst ev'ry accident had I provided:
And now, I hope that all these machinations
Will be completely baffled. Happily,
I was inform'd of them in time; and Jove,
In his compassion, certainly ordain'd
That such a fearful mystery to me,
Me, not a father, should be first divulged.
I tell this to thee, trembling and with tears:
But yet 'tis fit that I reveal it to thee,
Ere to thy dwelling thou . . .
Bru. No other dwelling
Except the forum and the tomb, remains
For wretched Brutus.—'Tis my duty now
To give, ere death to Brutus, life to Rome.
Col. My heart thou rendest. Thy excessive grief
Makes me almost insensible to mine . . .
But, who can tell? . . . perchance thy sons, e'en yet,
May vindicate themselves . . . Hear them thyself . . .
I have not yet of this conspiracy
Spoken to any one, except thyself:

I will adopt the most effectual measures,
That no man, during this approaching night,
Shall even quit his dwelling: all the people
I have by day-break summon'd to the forum . . .
Bru. And all the people, by to-morrow's dawn,
The real truth, whate'er that truth may be,
Shall from my lips receive.
Col. I hear, methinks,
The steps of the unhappy youths . . .
Bru. My sons! . . .
Such I this morning deem'd them; foes to me
Have they become, and traitors to their country? . . .

SCENE III.

TITUS, TIBERIUS, *among Lictors;* BRUTUS, COLLATINUS.

Bru. Let ev'ry man retire: do ye alone
Advance.
Tit. Ah, father! . . .
Bru. I of Rome am consul.—
I ask of you if ye are citizens
Of Rome.
Tib. We are; and sons of Brutus yet . . .
Tit. And we will prove it, if the consul deign
To hear us.
Col. At their gestures, at their words,
I feel my heart transpierced.
Bru. —This is a scroll,
Which the perfidious wretch Mamiliüs bore
To the proscribed Tarquinii. Upon it,
With many other names, are yours inscribed.
Ye to your country, then, are traitors, now
No more the sons of Brutus; but the sons
Of infamous expatriated tyrants.
Tit. 'Tis true (too true!) that I first added there
'Neath many other noble names, my name;
And his, my brother afterwards inscribed,
By my example urged. He is not guilty:
Be it whate'er it may, the penalty
To me alone is due. He evermore
Dissuaded me . . .

Tib. Yet I, perplex'd, confounded,
Knew not what other counsel to propose:
And it seem'd indispensable to us
To save, at all events, our sire betray'd.
Mamilius had so artfully entwined
Falsehood and truth, that we, caught by his arts,
Deeming our father by all men abandon'd,
Were inadvertently ourselves constrain'd
Thus to betray him, by our too great love.
Ah! if we're criminal, alike have we
Incurr'd the punishment annex'd to guilt:
But the sole punishment we apprehend,
The sole insufferable punishment,
(Paternal hatred,) we call Heav'n to witness,
And swear, that neither of us merit this.

Bru. O infamy! and have ye promised then
To reinstate, with these confed'rate traitors,
The banish'd tyrant?

Tit. I, by signing, hoped
To render Tarquin merciful to thee . . .

Bru. To Brutus? Tarquin merciful to Brutus?—
And even were it thus; perfidious one,
Shouldst thou betray thy country e'en for me?
Did ye not both erewhile, both swear with me,
Rather to die than ever to submit,
Let him be who he may, to any king?

Tit. This I deny not, no . . .

Bru. Then ye are both
Perjured and traitors . . . In this paper ye
Have sign'd at once your own death; . . . and your father's! . . .

Tib. Thou weepest, father? . . . If paternal tears,
Moist'ning the eyelids of the judge severe,
Attest at least that altogether we
Are not unworthy of thy tenderness,
We die exulting for the sake of Rome.

Tit. But, though mistaken, Titus neither was
Or vile or criminal . . .

Bru. O sons! O sons! . . .
—Why do I call you sons? ye are my first,
Ye are my sole dishonor. At the cost

Both of his glory and his liberty,
Ye, ye would purchase for your wretched father
A despicable life? ye would reduce me
To pine with you in double slavery,
Then when 'twas in your pow'r to go with me,
Free and unshackled, to a noble death?
And, to achieve an enterprise so base,
Ye became traitors to your rising country?
To honor deaf? and perjured to the gods?—
And let me grant that I had been to-day
Deserted and betray'd by ev'ry Roman;
That, following your example, I had stoop'd
The pity of the tyrant to implore;
Ah, fools! yet more, far more than guilty, fools!
Thought ye, that in the heart of an expell'd
Vile tyrant, aught could possibly take root,
Save a fierce thirst for vengeance and for blood?
To an opprobrious, ling'ring, certain death,
Did ye, to save him, now reserve your father.

Tit. Fear, I confess, in reading in that scroll
So many, and so many potent names,
My breast invaded, and made me esteem
The lofty enterprise impossible.
Already (as thou know'st), although my heart
Wish'd its success, I thought it difficult,
And in itself both perilous and doubtful.
Hence, when I saw the aspect of events
In such a short space absolutely change;
Saw to the king the citizens return,
And those the most illustrious, in a crowd;
I fear'd for Rome, where much blood, and in vain,
And first of all thy blood, was doom'd to run.
A hope sprung in my heart, that, if our names
Were added to the names already written,
Thus, by our means, our father might at least
Be rescued from the vengeance of the king:
And this to us Mamilius craftily
Promised in many words.

Bru. What hast thou done?
What hast thou done? O Heav'ns!—Ah, at that time
Thou wert a citizen of Rome no longer;

Since thou for me betrayedst Rome . . . Nor then
Wert thou a son of Brutus, since his honor
Thou soldest at the price of servitude.
Tib. Ah! father, do not wreak on him alone
Thy just disdain; I equally deserve it.
I also fear'd for thee, I must confess it;
We loved our father better than our country:
Yes, father, this alone was our offence.
Col. Ah, wretched youths! . . . O wretched father! . . .
Bru. Yes,
Ye were indeed more than the sons of Rome,
The sons of Brutus! Brought up as ye were
In abject slav'ry, I indeed, constrain'd
By the complexion of the times to cheat you,
With lofty and invigorating thoughts
I could not nourish you, as it behoved
A citizen and parent...O my sons,
I for your error seek no other cause.
Myself, myself alone I blame for this,
My silence and my former servitude;
And, though assumed, my very fear itself,
Which taught you also to be apprehensive.
Ah! pity in my bosom is not mute; . . .
But, in a more authoritative voice,
Tremendous justice to my conscience cries;
And Rome now rightfully lays claim to it.—
My sons, belovèd sons, I am, alas!
More wretched far than ye...Ah why, O Heav'ns!
Since in your free arbitrament it lay
Rome to betray, or doom your sire to death;
Wherefore did ye forget, that to avert
From Brutus infamy (his sole true death)
A sword was all sufficient? And he had one;
This his sons knew: and how, when they knew this,
Could they one moment tremble for their father?
Col. Ah! for awhile, O Brutus, somewhat calm
Thy grief and indignation: yet, who knows?...
To save them p'rhaps...
Tit. Ah! ye would wish in vain
To save me now: I could no longer live;
I've lost my sire's esteem, perchance his love...

Ah! 'tis not possible for me to live.
But let my sad example now excuse
My guiltless younger brother; save him, father...
Tib. Immense, O father, is our guilt; but we
Alike are guilty; and thou art not just,
If thou on us an equal punishment
Inflictest not. Perchance expressly now
The heav'nly genius tutelar of Rome
Decrees to liberty a lasting basis
In our severe example.
Bru. O my sons!...
Ah! let this now suffice... Your excellent,
Sublime, immortalizing penitence
Tears as by piecemeal my distracted heart...
Alas! e'en yet I am, e'en yet a father,
More than a consul... Through my ev'ry vein
I feel a horrid chillness creep... Ah! all,
Yes, all my blood will, for my country's sake,
Ere long be shed... To re-establish Rome,
The last blood indispensable is mine:
Provided that my country I enfranchise,
I swear, O sons, that I will not one day
Survive your loss.—Let me, for the last time,
Belovèd children, clasp you to my breast;...
Still can I do it... Tears, alas! forbid...
My further utt'rance... Fare ye well,... my sons.—
Consul of Rome, I give thee back the scroll.
A sacred duty wills that on the morrow
Thou shalt present it to assembled Rome.
Meanwhile the guilty to thy custody
Remain committed. I will also come,
At early dawn, to meet thee in the forum.—
I cannot longer now endure the presence
Of such an agonizing spectacle.

Scene IV.

COLLATINUS, TITUS, TIBERIUS, LICTORS.

Col. Fatal necessity.
Tit. Unhappy father!...
Tib. Provided Rome be saved!...
Col. All follow me.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

PEOPLE, VALERIUS; SENATORS, PATRICIANS, *all seated.* COLLATINUS *and* BRUTUS *in the rostrum.*

Col. Romans, to you the sun of yesterday
Triumphantly and joyfully arose;
When, at this hour exactly, from yourselves
The earliest cries of liberty resounded
Through the wide air: I, in my grief absorb'd,
Meanwhile stood mute. But on this dreadful day
A part quite different, alas! on me
Fate has devolved, since, with the noble Brutus,
Ye have been pleased to choose me for your consul.—
All swore, (I hope ye recollect it well,)
All of you, in the forum, yesterday,
Swore to the gods, that, sooner than return
To the vile yoke of monarchs, ye would die.
And not alone the execrable Tarquins,
But ev'ry man that dared to make himself
Superior to the laws, by this your oath
Expressly was proscribed.—Would ye believe it?
I, in your presence, must unhappily,
'Mong the most potent noble citizens,
Many impeach, as infamous and perjured,
Who have, 'gainst Rome and 'gainst themselves, (too much so!)
Been plotting for the king.
People. What? For the king?
Who are they? Who are the flagitious traitors,
Unworthy to be Romans? Quickly name them;
We will that all be slain . . .
Col. Ah! . . . who can tell,
P'rhaps, . . . when ye hear the names? . . . When I attempt
To utter them, I tremble . . . And far more
Shall I implore from you your clemency
Than your stern justice. Almost all of these
Are youths: they have not, from their unripe age,
Yet felt the ills, so countless and so bitter,
Of civil servitude: the greater part,

Effeminate through indolence, brought up
In a corrupted court's pestif'rous shade,
Have only tasted tyranny's sweet bait,
And nothing know of its atrocious poison.
People. Whoever they may be, they're traitors, perjured;
Compassion they deserve not; let them perish:
As the corrupt and putrifying members
Of a new city, liberty decrees
That they be first lopp'd off.—Their names. Let's hear them...
Va. And we, although too thoroughly convinced
That this disgrace (their permanent dishonor)
To the patrician tribe belongs, yet now
We with the people emulously seek
To know the culprits' names.—O noble people,
For high achievements born! O happy ye!
Ye only did sustain the tyrant's yoke;
But to the coveted impediment
Of fetters well deserved, in us were join'd,
Debased patricians, their disgrace and shame.
We, nearer to the tyrant; more enslaved,
And less regretting slavery, than you;
We thence assuredly more worthy of it;
I feel the presage; yes, we, we have been
The first in perjury.—O Collatinus,
Both in the name of senate and patricians,
I ask it of thee; whosoe'er they be,
Divulge the criminals. Rome should to-day
By noble proofs recall what fierce and burning
Longing for honor now pervades us all.
People. O worthy ye of better fate!... May Heav'n
Grant, that the few to servitude seduced,
Neither plebeian nor patrician names
Henceforward bear! The trait'rous and the perjured
Cease to be Romans.
Col. Many are the guilty:
But diff'rent their degrees of guilt. There are
Among them those who servitude abhor;
And who have elevated courteous hearts;
But in a thousand ways assail'd, entrapp'd,
By base Mamilius...

People. Where is now the villain?
O rage! where is he?...
Col. Ere the night had fallen,
From Rome I banish'd him: the sacred rights
Of hospitality required his safety,
Though he were culpable. Religiously
The citizens of Rome each right observe:
Faith is the basis of our sacred freedom.
People. In truth, thou hast done well from our first rage
To wrest him: justice thus is not by us
Attainted. We shall have, in fair array,
The deities and virtue with us listed:
But round the banners of the wicked tyrants
Shall ever hover treachery and baseness,
And the just wrath of Heav'n...
Va. But shall we give them,
That so they may avail themselves of it
To injure Rome, their vitiating wealth?
Far more than steel, gold in the tyrant's hands
We've reason now to deprecate.
People. 'Tis true;
We will not to their baseness lend such arms:
But shall we therefore take the goods of others?
What boots to us, who in our hands have swords,
And at our breasts a mail of liberty,
What boots to us the ministry of gold?...
Va. Let it be burn'd; let all the tyrant's wealth
Be burn'd; or to the waters of the Tiber
Committed...
People. And with these eternally
May their remembrance perish...
Va. Likewise perish
All recollection of our servitude.
Col. —Magnanimous, and worthy of yourselves,
Is the decision; your decree in this
Shall quickly be fulfill'd.
People. Yes: but meanwhile,
The names of the conspirators divulge,
And the conspiracy.
Col. ...O Heav'ns!...I tremble
In undertaking such a cruel office...

People. And Brutus stands immovable and silent?
He seems to have his eyes suffused with tears;
Though shedding none; and fierce his downcast looks
He fixes on the earth.—O Collatinus,
Do thou, then, quickly speak.
Col. . . . O Heav'ns! . . .
Va. But what
Then ails thee? The deliverer of Rome,
The husband of Lucretia, and our consul,
Art thou not, Collatinus? Canst thou be
The traitors' friend? and canst thou feel compassion
Tow'rds those who for their country felt it not?
Col. —When ye shall hear me speak, those very pangs
Which tear my heart and paralyse my tongue
Will speedily assail you: weeping, mute,
Alarm'd, with pity and amazement stricken,
Already I behold you.—To the king
Mamilius went, the bearer of this scroll:
I caused it to be taken from his hands,
Ere he from Rome departed: and the traitor
Confess'd, affrighted, that the citizens
Herein inscribed had sworn, the following night
To open to the king the gates of Rome. . .
People. O treason! Let the guilty perish . . .
Va. Death
Were a light punishment for such a crime.
Col. The fatal paper let Valerius read
To you assembled. See it; take it: . . . I
Cannot pronounce these names.
Va. What do I see? . . .
O execrable list! . . . With his own hand
Each one his name has written? . . .—Romans, hear.—
Aquilius the sire, and his six sons,
Head the conspiracy: they first are written.
O Heav'ns! . . .
Col. . . . When shown the paper was to each,
They all confess'd it: they are now in chains;
And ye will see them dragg'd, ere long, before you.
Va. . . . Alas! . . . There follow . . .
People. Who doth follow? Speak.

Va. . . . Alas! . . . It is incredible. I read . . .
Four names . . .
People. Whose names? proceed . . .
Va. They are the brothers
Of Brutus' wife . . .
People. Heav'ns! The Vitellii?
Col. Alas! . . . soon will ye hear far other names.
And in your presence, one by one, ere long . . .
Va. Why name them one by one? The Martii
I read, Octavii, and Fabii,
And many, many more; alas! . . . The last
Make e'en my hair to stand on end with horror . . .
Yes . . . from my hands . . . at such a sight as this . . .
The paper falls . . .
People. Who can they be?
Va. O Heav'ns! . . .
No . . . ne'er will ye believe . . .
(*Universal silence.*)
Bru. —The names last written,
Were Titus and Tiberius.
People. What! Thy sons? . . .
Unhappy father! Inauspicious day! . . .
Bru. O day, to you auspicious! Brutus knows
No other sons but Roman citizens;
And these are such no longer. Yesterday
I swore for Rome's sake all my blood to shed;
This oath I'm ready, and at ev'ry risk,
To-day to consummate . . .
People. Ah wretched father! . . .
(*Universal silence.*)
Bru. —But what? with horror stupefied, and dumb,
Do I see universal Rome?—for Brutus
Does ev'ry individual tremble here?—
But say: whom does the fiercest peril menace,
Brutus or Rome? Each man who hears my voice
Wills beyond all things, or he ought to will,
To render Rome secure, and free, and great;
Whate'er the consequence, he ought to will it.
Chains are in store for us, and cruel slaughter;
For Rome her consul trembles; hence her people
Cannot now tremble for a single father.

The soft affections, and the gush of tears,
(That in the forum from a Roman eye
Can never start, save when they're shed for Rome,)
Those soft affections and that gush of tears,
In the profound recesses of our hearts
Are now suppress'd.—I first should show to you
(Thus destiny ordains) what permanent
And lofty base 'tis indispensable
For us to give to an eternal city.—
Lictors, advance; and let the criminals
Be quickly dragg'd in chains into the forum.—
Now thou'rt the only, the true king of Rome,
People of Mars. Thy majesty by these
Hath been offended; signal punishment
Is now their due; and the avenging thee
Devolves upon the consuls ...[1]

SCENE II.

BRUTUS *and* COLLATINUS *in the rostrum.* VALERIUS, PEOPLE, SENATORS, PATRICIANS. *The Conspirators all in chains among the Lictors; the last of these* TITUS *and* TIBERIUS.

People. Ah! how many,
How many may the traitors be? ... O Heav'ns!
Behold the sons of Brutus!
Col. Ah! ... I cannot
Longer restrain my tears...
Bru. —A noble day,
A noble day is this: and evermore
Will be a memorable one for Rome.—
O ye, so villanously base, who dared
Your scarcely-born true country to betray;
Behold ye all before assembled Rome.
Let each of you, if it be possible,
Defend himself before her.—All are silent?—
Rome and the consuls ask of you yourselves,
Whether to you, convicted criminals,
The punishment of death be due?—
(*Universal silence.*)
Bru. —To death

[1] Brutus is silent in seeing the lictors return with the conspirators.

Then all of you are rightfully condemn'd.
The people's majesty, with one consent,
Pronounces the irrevocable sentence.
Why should we longer tarry?—
(Universal silence.)
O! my colleague
Weeps, and is silent?...silent is the senate?...
Silent the citizens?—
People. O fatal moment!...
Yet just and necessary is their death.
Tit. One innocent alone, amongst us all,
Now dies: and this is he.
People. O pity! See,
He of his brother speaks.
Tib. Believe him not:
Or we are equally both innocent,
Or equally transgressors: in the paper
My name is written next to his.
Bru. Not one
Whose name is written in that fatal scroll
Can be call'd innocent. Some may, perchance,
Have been less culpable in their intent;
But only to the gods our thoughts are known;
And it would be an arbitrary judgment,
And thence unjust, the guilty to absolve,
As to condemn them from the inference
Drawn from profess'd intention. It would be
A spurious judgment; such as kings assume:
Not such as by a just and simple people
Is held in rev'rence: people who alone
To the tremendous sacred laws submit;
And who, save of the letter of those laws,
In their decrees, of nought avail themselves.
Col. ... Romans, 'tis true that these unhappy youths
Were with the rest of the conspirators
Involved; but then they were solicited,
Deluded, tamper'd with, and led astray
Into grave error by the base Mamilius.
He made them think that all was in the power
Of the Tarquinii: and thence their names
(Would ye believe it?) also they subscribed
Only to save their sire from death...

People. O Heav'ns!...
And is this true indeed? We then should save
These two alone...
Bru. Alas! what hear I?...ah!
Is this the people's voice? Just, free, and strong,
Ye now would make yourselves, and how? would ye
Lay, as the base of such an edifice,
A partial application of your laws?
That I, a father, might not weep, would ye
Now make so many other citizens,
Sons, brothers, fathers, weep? to the keen axe,
Which they have merited, shall now so many,
So many others yield their passive necks;
And shall two culprits only be exempt
From this, because they seem not what they are?
They were the consul's sons, although in deeds
They were not so: 'mongst the conspirators
With their own hand were they enroll'd: or all,
Or none of them should die. Absolve them all,
And straightway ruin Rome; save two alone,
And it will be unjust, if so it seem.
Now, with compassion, rather than with justice,
Hath Collatinus these two youths defended,
Asserting that they wish'd to save their father:
P'rhaps this was true; but p'rhaps the others wish'd,
Their fathers some, their brothers some, and some
Their sons to save; and not on this account
Are they less guilty, since they rather chose
To sacrifice their country, than their friends.—
The father in his heart may weep for this;
But in the first place should the genuine consul
Secure the safety of his native city:...
And then may he, by mighty grief o'erwhelm'd,
Fall lifeless on the bodies of his sons.—
Ye will behold, ere many hours are past,
To what excess of danger, by these men,
Ye have been brought: reciprocally strong
To make ourselves, inflexible in freedom,
Is an example indispensable,
Ever to be remember'd: harsh, but just.—
Depart, O lictors: be the culprits all

Bound to the pillars; let the axe descend
Upon them.—I have not a heart of steel...[1]
Ah! Collatinus, 'tis the time for thee
To pity me: perform for me the rest.[2]
People. O cruel sight!... The wretched father dares
Not look at them ... And yet, their death is just.
Bru. —The punishment approaches.—The delinquents
Have heard the sentence of the consul...Now,
Think on the pangs of the distracted father...
Each cleaving axe already gleams on high...
O Heav'ns! my very heart is rent in twain...
I needs must in my mantle veil my eyes...
Ah! this may to the father granted be...
But ye, fix ye on them your eyes: now Rome
Free and eternal rises from that blood.
Col. O superhuman strength!...
Va. Of Rome is Brutus
Father and god...
People. The god of Rome...
Bru. I am
The most unhappy man that ever lived.[3]

[1] Brutus sinks on his seat, and turns his eyes from the spectacle.
[2] Collatinus sees the conspirators disposed in order, and bound to the stake.
[3] The curtain falls, while the lictors stand ready to strike the conspirators.

XVIII.

MYRRHA.

THE ARGUMENT.

MYRRHA was the daughter and only child of Cinyras, king of Cyprus, and his wife Cenchreis (called by Alfieri Cecris). These three, with Eurycleia, her old nurse and faithful attendant, and Pereus, heir to the throne of Epirus, to whom she is engaged to be married, form the *dramatis personae*. The scene is laid just before the intended wedding.

The play opens with Cecris lamenting to Eurycleia the unaccountable misery of Myrrha, at a time when her engagement to Pereus, a prince in every way admirable, ought to fill her with happiness. Eurycleia, who sees more of her than any one, gives her mother a lamentable account of the agonies she is suffering, which make her suppose that she cannot love Pereus, although she is sure that there is no one else on whom her affections can be fixed. Cinyras next tells his wife that, whatever may be the consequences, he will never compel Myrrha to marry against her will, and desires her to inform Myrrha of this.

In the second Act, Cinyras sends for Pereus, whom he entirely approves as his son-in-law, and asks him if he thinks that Myrrha really returns his love. Pereus describes her strange and irresolute conduct, now desiring the marriage to be hastened on, and now to be postponed, without assigning any reason. He says that if she does not love him, he will abandon his claim to her rather than see her unhappy. A meeting now takes place between him and Myrrha. She continues the same vacillating conduct, but vows that in any case she will marry no one but

him, and ends by requiring the wedding to take place immediately, as arranged, but on the understanding that they leave the country for ever the next day. When alone with Eurycleia, the latter tells her that she had been to the altar of Venus to implore her pity on Myrrha, but that the goddess had angrily rejected her vows and motioned her to leave the temple. Myrrha announces that she persists in her purpose, but that she expects to die directly afterwards.

The father and mother have now a joint interview with Myrrha. She recounts the anguish she continues to suffer, but admits the great merits of Pereus, and obtains their consent to her leaving Cyprus the day after the marriage. She then retires to prepare for the approaching solemnity. Cecris then confesses to Cinyras that, intoxicated with happiness at possessing such a husband and daughter, she had once ventured to insult Venus by refusing to offer incense to her, and had boasted that Myrrha's beauty attracted more votaries to Cyprus than the worship of Venus herself; and that from that day an entire change had come over Myrrha. Cinyras feels that her only safety lies now in leaving Cyprus forthwith. They tell Pereus of their consent to this immediate departure, and he expresses apprehension at her resolve, but they reassure him.

The fourth Act opens with Myrrha telling Eurycleia that she is ready for the ceremony, and regretting that she cannot take her away with her. Pereus comes, and she assures him of her readiness to live happily with him and look upon him as her deliverer from her troubles. The preparations for the rites now begin, and the priests and choruses enter. The latter chant various hymns, in the midst of which Myrrha is seized with an attack of frenzy, and announces that the Furies have taken possession of her. In the midst of the general horror, Pereus announces that their union is at an end, and rushes off in despair. Cinyras reproaches his daughter for her conduct. When alone with her mother, Myrrha accuses her of being the cause of all her wretchedness by bringing her into the world, but can give no coherent account of her behaviour.

Cinyras, at the commencement of the fifth Act, laments

over the death of Pereus, which he had just discovered. Myrrha enters, and he tells her the sad story of Pereus having killed himself immediately after his departure from them, and informs his daughter that he is satisfied that she is in love with some one else, and that, whoever it may be, he will, for the sake of her happiness, consent to her union with him. She makes only confused replies, and at last, when hard-pressed by him, drops words which reveal to him the dreadful fact that it is with himself that she is in love. The confession has scarcely escaped her lips, when she seizes her father's dagger and inflicts a mortal wound on herself. Her mother and Eurycleia enter, only to learn the sad story from the lips of Cinyras. Myrrha dies, lamenting that Eurycleia had not given her a sword in time to have prevented her confession to her father.

The story of Myrrha (who is also known as Smyrna) is to be found in Ovid in a much more repulsive form than that given by Alfieri. In the old legend, Myrrha was changed into a tree, after fleeing to the forest, and became the mother of Adonis. Hyginus (*Fab.*) says, like Alfieri, that her unhappy love for her father was a punishment for her mother Cenchreis having insulted Venus in the manner described in this play. Schlegel says that "Myrrha is a perilous attempt to treat with propriety a subject equally revolting to the senses and the feelings." Arteaga, the Spanish writer of a work on the Italian stage, criticises this play severely. Sismondi dismisses it without notice in a single line.

Alfieri himself, however, had a high opinion of this tragedy. He says in his Life (Epoch iv. c. 14), "I happened to come across (in 1784), in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, that very warm and truly divine allocution of Myrrha to her nurse. It made me burst into tears, and the idea of making a tragedy of it flashed across my mind." He thought that by making such modifications in the original story as "might bring it within the confines of our customs," he might produce the same effect on the spectators as the pathetic description of Ovid had produced on himself. He was much pleased with his personification of

Myrrha herself, though he had some doubts as to the scene in Act IV., where, impelled by her furious passion and entirely beside herself, she insults her own mother. Cinyras he describes as "a perfect father and a most perfect king"; Pereus is "an excellent prince," though he fears that he may not be very successful in drawing his and similar characters of tender lovers; Cecris is an excellent mother, but he confesses that on the whole she was "somewhat of a mamma and a chatterbox." Lastly, Eurycleia is also "an excellent person, of extreme simplicity, and in no respect sublime." Unlike Ovid, Alfieri does not make her the confidante of Myrrha in respect of her unhappy love, "in order that he might thus save the virtue of Eurycleia and prolong the innocence of Myrrha."

On the whole, he thought that this tragedy would produce a great effect on the stage.

The reason for *Myrrha* occupying this rather peculiar position between the two *Brutuses* will be seen on referring to the notes respecting the following tragedy.

DEDICATION

TO THE NOBLE LADY

THE COUNTESS LOUISA STOLBERG

OF ALBANY.[1]

SOMETIMES regretting that thy gentle name
Is yet suppress'd by me, in front of these
To thee too-oft repeated tragedies,
Whence I of folly p'rhaps shall reap the blame;
Now would I grace with thee the one whose frame
The least displeases thee: though all my ease,
Though all the pleasure which gave pow'r to please,
From thee, sole spurce of inspiration, came.
The at once innocent and dreadful love
Of the unhappy maid from Cinyras sprung,
Always caused tears from thy bright eyes to flow:
These tears imperiously my bosom move
To consecrate to thee, (who heard'st it sung
With sympathetic feeling,) Myrrha's woe.

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

[1] See also the Dedication of *Alcestis II.* (*post*).

MYRRHA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CINYRAS.	EURYCLEIA.
CECRIS.	*Chorus.*
MYRRHA.	*Priests.*
PEREUS.	*People.*

SCENE.—*The Palace in Cyprus.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

CECRIS, EURYCLEIA.

Ce. Come, faithful Eurycleia: now the dawn
Scarce glimmers; and to me so soon as this
My royal consort is not wont to come.
Now, thou canst tell me all that thou dost know
Of our afflicted daughter. Even now
Thy troubled face, and thy half-stifled sighs,
Announce to me . . .
Eu. O queen! . . . Unhappy Myrrha
Drags on a life far worse than any death.
I dare not to the monarch represent
Her dreadful state: the troubles of a maiden
Ill could a father understand; thou canst,
A mother. Hence to thee I come; and pray
That thou wilt hear me.

Ce. It is true, that I
For a long time have seen the lustre languish
Of her rare beauty: obstinate and mute,
A mortal melancholy dims in her
That fascinating look: and, could she weep!...
But, when with me, she's silent; and her eyes
With tears are pregnant, though for ever dry.
In vain do I embrace her; and in vain
Request, entreat her, to divulge her grief:
Her sorrow she denies; while day by day
I see her by her grief consumed.

Eu. A daughter
To you is she by blood; to me, by love;
Thou knowest that I brought her up: and I
Exist in her alone; and almost half
Of the fourth lustre is already spent,
Since ev'ry day I've clasp'd her to my breast
In my fond arms... And now, can it be true,
That e'en to me, to whom she was accustom'd
From earliest childhood to divulge each thought,
That e'en to me she now appears reserved?
And if I speak to her of her distress,
To me too she denies it, and insists,
And seems displeased with me... But yet she oft,
Spite of herself, bursts into tears before me.

Ce. Such sadness, in a bosom still so young,
At first I deem'd to be the consequence
Of the irresolution which she felt,
In the oft-urged selection of a spouse.
The most illustrious, pow'rful potentates
Of Greece and Asia, all in rivalry
From the wide-spreading rumor of her beauty,
To Cyprus flock'd: and, as respected us,
She was the perfect mistress of her choice.
These various impulses, unknown, discordant,
Might in a youthful bosom well excite
No slight disturbance. She his valor praised
In one; his courteous manners in another:
This with a larger kingdom was endow'd;
In that were majesty and comeliness
Blended consummately: and he who caught

Her eyes the most, she fear'd perchance the least
Might gratify her father. Thoroughly
I, as a mother and a woman, know
What conflicts, in the young unpractised hearts
Of timid virgins, might be well excited
By such uncertainty. But, when by Pereus,
Heir of Epirus, ev'ry doubt seem'd banish'd;
To whom, for pow'r, nobility, and youth,
Valor, and comeliness, and sense, not one
Could be compared; then, when the lofty choice
Of Myrrha gave such pleasure to us all;
When she, on this account, ought to exult
With self-congratulation; we behold
The storm more furiously arise within her,
And more insufferable agonies
Consume her ev'ry day!... At such a sight,
I feel my heart as if asunder torn.
Eu. Ah, had she never made that fatal choice!
From that day forth, her anguish has increased:
This very night, the last one that precedes
Her lofty nuptial rites, (O Heav'ns!) I fear'd
That it had been to her the last of life.—
Motionless, silent, lay I in my bed,
From hers not far remote; and, still intent
On all her movements, made pretence to sleep:
But I for months and months have now beheld her
In such a martyrdom, that all repose
Flies from my agèd limbs. I for thy daughter
The comfort of benignant Sleep invoked
Most silently within myself; for o'er her
For many, many nights he has not spread
His downy wings.—Her sobs and sighs at first
Were almost smother'd; they were few; were broken:
Then (hearing me no longer) they increased
To such ungovernable agony,
That, at the last, against her will, they changed
To bitter tears, to sobs, to piercing screams.
Amid her lamentations, from her lips
One word alone escaped: "Death!... death!"; and oft,
In broken accents, she repeated it.
I started from my couch; and hastily

I ran to her: and scarce had she beheld me,
When, in the midst, she suddenly repress'd
Each tear, each sigh, each word; and, recomposed
In royal stateliness, as if almost
Incensed with me, in accents calm she cried:
"Why comest thou to me? what wouldst thou with me?"...
I could not answer her; I wept, embraced her,
Then wept again... At length my speech return'd.
O! how did I implore her, how conjure her,
To tell me her affliction, which, at last,
Thus in her bosom pent, would, with her life,
My life destroy!... Thou surely, though a mother,
Couldst not have spoken to her with more fond,
And more persuasive love.—She well doth know
How much I love her; and, at my discourse,
Once more the torrents from her eyes gush'd forth,
And she embraced me, and with tenderness
To my fond importunities replied.
But still, inflexibly reserved, she said
That ev'ry maiden, when the nuptial day
Approaches, is oppress'd with transient grief;
And she commanded me to hide it from you.
But so deep-rooted is her malady,
So fearful are its inward ravages,
That I run tremblingly to thee; and beg
That, by thy means, these rites may be delay'd:
To death the maiden goes, be sure of this.—
Thou art a mother; I say nothing more.

Ce. ... Ah!... choked by weeping,... scarcely... can I speak.—
Whence can this malady arise, ah, whence?...
No other martyrdom, at her young age,
Is there, except the martyrdom of love.
But, if she is inflamed by love for Pereus,
Whom of her own accord she chose, say, whence,
When on the point of gaining him, this grief?
And, if another flame feed on her heart,
Wherefore hath she herself selected Pereus
Among so many others?

Eu. ... Her fierce grief

Doth not, I swear to thee, arise from love.
She always was observed by me; nor could she,
Without my seeing it, resign her heart
To any passion. And she would, be sure,
Have told it me; her mother as to years,
But, in our love, a sister. Her deportment,
Her countenance, her sighs, her very silence,
Ah! all convince me that she loves not Pereus.
She, if not joyous, was, before she chose him,
Tranquil at least: and thou know'st well how she
Delay'd her choice. But yet, assuredly
No other man pleased her, ere she saw Pereus:
'Tis true, she seem'd to give to him the pref'rence,
Because it was, or so at least she deem'd it,
Her duty to choose one. She loves him not;
To me it seems so: yet, what other suitor,
Compared with noble Pereus, can she love?
I know her to possess a lofty heart;
A heart in which a flame, that is not lofty,
Could never enter. This I safely swear:
The man that she could love, of royal blood
Must be; or else she would not be his lover.
Now, who of these have ye admitted here,
Whom at her will she could not with her hand
Make happy? Then her grief is not from love.
Love, though it feeds itself with tears and sighs,
Yet still it leaves I know not what of hope,
That vivifies the centre of the heart;
But not a ray of hope is gleaming on her:
Incurable her wound; alas, too surely!...
Ah, could the death, that she invokes for ever,
Be granted first to me! I should, at least,
Not see her thus by a slow fire consumed!...

Ce. Thou dost distract me... To these marriage rites
Never will I consent, if they are destined
To take from us our only daughter... Go;
Return to her; and do not say to her
That thou hast spoken with me. I myself,
Soon as the tears are from my eyes dispersed,
And my face recomposed, will thither come.

Eu. Ah! quickly come. I will return to her;

I am impatient once more to behold her.
O Heav'ns! who knows if she has not once more
Been with these frantic paroxysms seized,
While I have thus at length with thee conversed?
Alas! what pity do I feel for thee,
Unhappy mother!... I fly hence; but thou,
Ah, linger not!... The less that thou delayest,
The more good wilt thou do...

Ce. How much delay
Costs me, thou mayst conceive: but I will not
Call her at such an unaccustom'd hour,
Nor go to her, much less present myself
With troubled countenance. It is not fit
To strike her either with distress, or fear:
So modest, timid, pliable is she,
That no means with that noble disposition
Can be too gentle. Quickly go; in me
Repose, as I in thee alone repose.

Scene II.

CECRIS.

Ce. What can it be? A year has well-nigh pass'd,
Since I was first tormented by her grief;
And yet no trace whence Myrrha's sorrow springs
Can I discern!—Perchance the gods themselves,
Envious of our prosperity, would snatch
From us so rare a daughter, the sole comfort,
Sole hope of both her parents? O ye gods,
'Twere better never to have giv'n her to us!
O Venus! thou sublime divinity
Of this to thee devoted, sacred isle,
Perchance her too great beauty moves thy envy?
And hence perchance thou, equally with her,
Reducest me to this distracted state?
Ah! yes, thou wilt that I should thus atone
In tears of blood, for my inordinate,
Presumptuous transports of a loving mother...

Scene III.

CINYRAS, CECRIS.

Cin. Weep not, O lady. I have briefly heard
The painful narrative; to this disclosure
Constrain'd I Eurycleia. Ah! believe me,
Sooner a thousand times would I expire,
Than with our idolized and only daughter
Adopt coercive means. Who could have thought
That by this marriage, which was once her choice,
She could be brought to such extremity?
But, let it be dissolved. My life, my realm,
And e'en my glory are as nothing worth,
If I see not our only daughter happy.

Ce. Yet, Myrrha ne'er was fickle. We beheld her
In understanding far surpass her years;
Discreet in ev'ry wish; and constant, eager
Our smallest wishes to anticipate.
She knows full well, that in her noble choice
We deem'd ourselves most fortunate: she cannot,
No, never, hence repent of it.

Cin. But yet,
If she in heart repent of it?—O lady,
Hear her: and all a mother's gentle pleadings
Do thou adopt with her; do thou at length
Compel her to unfold her heart to thee,
While there is time for this. And I meanwhile
Will mine unfold to thee; and I assure thee,
Nay, e'en I swear, that, of my heart's first thoughts,
My daughter is the object. It is true,
Epirus' king I wish'd to make my friend:
And the young Pereus, his distinguish'd son,
Adds, to the future hope of a rich kingdom,
Other advantages, in my esteem
More precious far. A gentle character,
A heart no less compassionate than lofty,
Doth he evince. Besides, he seems to me
By Myrrha's beauties fervently inflamed.—
I never could select a worthier consort
To make my daughter happy; and no doubts
Of these pledged marriage rites torment his heart;

His father's indignation and his own,
If we renounced our covenanted faith,
Would be most just; and their rage might to us
Be even terrible: in this behold
Many and potent reasons in the eyes
Of ev'ry other prince; but none in mine.
Nature made me a father; chance, a king.
Those which are deem'd by others of my rank
Reasons of state, to which they are accustom'd
To make all natural affections yield,
In my paternal bosom would not weigh
Against one single sigh of my dear daughter.
I, by her happiness alone, can be
Myself made happy. Go; say this to her;
Assure her, also, that she need not fear
Displeasing me, in telling me the truth:
Nought let her fear, except the making us,
Through her own means, unhappy. I meanwhile,
By questions artfully proposed, will learn
From Pereus if he deem his love return'd;
And thus will I prepare him for the issue,
No less afflicting to himself than me.
But yet, the time is brief for doing this,
If fate decree that we retract our purpose.
Ce. Thou speakest well: I fly to her.—It brings
Great solace to me, in our grief, to see
That one accordant will, one love, is ours.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

CINYRAS, PEREUS.

Pe. Behold me here, obedient to thy wishes.
I hope, O king, the hour is not far distant,
When with the loving epithet of father
I may accost thee . . .
Cin. Listen to me, Pereus.—
If thou well know thyself, thou canst not fail

To be convinced what happiness a father
Who loves his only daughter must experience
At having thee as son-in-law. 'Tis certain,
Had I myself been destined to select
A spouse for Myrrha, I had chosen thee
Among the many and illustrious rivals
Who, with thyself, contended for her hand.
Thence, thou thyself mayst judge how doubly dear
Thou wert to me, when by herself elected.
Thou, in the judgment of impartial men,
In all pretensions wert unparagon'd;
But, in my judgment, more than for thy blood,
And thy paternal kingdom, thou both wert,
And art, the first for other qualities
Intrinsically thine, whence thou wouldst be,
E'en if a private man, eternally
Greater than any king...

Pe. Ah father!... (I
E'en now exult to call thee by this name)
Father, my greatest, nay, my only prize,
Consists in pleasing thee. I have presumed
To interrupt thee; pardon me: but I
Cannot, before I merit them, receive
From thee so many praises. To my heart
Thy speech will be a high encouragement,
To make me that which thou believ'st me now,
Or wishest me to be. Thy son-in-law,
And Myrrha's consort, largely should I be
With ev'ry lofty quality endow'd:
And I accept from thee the augury
Of virtue.

Cin. Ah! thou speakest as thou art.—
And, since thou art such, I shall dare to speak
To thee as to a son.—I clearly see
Thou lovest Myrrha with a genuine love;
And I should wrong thee most unworthily,
Could I e'en doubt of this. But,... tell me now;...
If my request is not too indiscreet,...
Art thou as much beloved?

Pe. ...I ought to hide
Nothing from thee.—Ah! Myrrha would, methinks,

Love me again, and yet it seems she cannot.
I cherish'd once a hope of her regard;
And yet I hope to gain it; or, at least,
My flatt'ring wishes still prolong the dream.
'Tis true, that, most inexplicably, she
Persists in her reserve. Thou, Cinyras,
Although thou be a father, still retainest
Thy youthful vigor, and remember'st love:
Know then, that evermore with trembling steps,
And as if by compulsion, she accosts me;
Over her face a deadly pallor steals;
Her lovely eyes are never turn'd towards me;
A few irresolute and broken words
She falters out, involved in mortal coldness;
Her eyes, eternally suffused with tears,
She fixes on the ground; in speechless grief
Her soul is buried; a pale sickliness
Dims, not annihilates, her charms divine:—
Behold her state. Yet, of connubial rites
She speaks; and now thou wouldst pronounce that she
Desired those rites; now, that, far worse than death,
She dreaded them; now, she herself assigns
The day for them, and now, she puts it off.
If I enquire the reason of her sadness,
Her lip denies it; but her countenance,
Of agony expressive, and of death,
Proclaims her great, incurable despair.
Me she assures, and each returning day
Repeats, that she would have me as her spouse;
She says not that she loves me; lofty, noble,
She knows not how to feign. I wish and fear
To hear from her the truth: I check my tears;
I burn, I languish, and I dare not speak.
Now from her faith, reluctantly bestow'd,
Would I myself release her; now again
I fain would die, since to resign her quite
I have no pow'r; yet, unpossess'd her heart,
Her person would I not possess . . . Alas! . . .
Whether I live or die, I scarcely know.—
Thus, both oppress'd, and though, with diff'rent griefs,
Both with affliction equally weigh'd down,

We have at last the fatal day attain'd,
The day which she herself irrevocably
Hath chosen for our marriage . . . Ah, were I
The only victim of such deep distress!
Cin. As much as she, dost thou excite my pity . . .
Thy frank and fervid eloquence bespeaks
A soul humane and lofty: such a soul
Did I ascribe to thee; hence to thyself
I will not less ingenuously speak.—
I tremble for my child. I share with thee
A lover's grief; ah, prince! do thou too share
A father's grief with me. Ah, if she were
Unhappy by my means! . . . 'Tis true, she chose thee;
'Tis true that none constrain'd her . . . but, if fear,
Or maiden modesty . . . In short, if Myrrha
Now should repent her promise wrongfully? . . .
Pe. No more; I understand thee. To a lover,
Who loves as I do, canst thou represent
The cherish'd object wretched for his sake?
Could I, though innocently, deem myself
The origin of all her wretchedness,
And not expire with grief?—Ah! Myrrha, now
Pronounce on me, and on my destiny,
A final sentence: fearlessly pronounce it,
If Pereus' love be irksome: yet for this
Never shall I regret that I have loved thee.
O, could I make her joyful by my tears! . . .
To me 'twould be a blessing e'en to die,
So that she might be happy.
Cin. Pereus, who
Can hear thee without weeping? . . . No, a heart
More faithful, more impassion'd than thine own,
There cannot be. Ah! as thou hast to me,
Couldst thou disclose it also to my daughter:
She could not hear thee, and refuse to open
To thee with equal confidence her own.
I do not think that she repents her choice;
(Who, knowing thee, could do this?) but perchance
Thou mayst solicit from her heart the source
Of her conceal'd distress.—Behold, she comes;
I had already summon'd her. With her

I leave thee; to the interview of lovers,
Fathers are ever a restraint. Now, prince,
Fully reveal to her thy lofty heart,
A heart by which all others must be sway'd.

SCENE II.

MYRRHA, PEREUS.

My. With Pereus doth he leave me? . . . Fatal trial!
This rends my heart indeed . . .
Pe. At length, O Myrrha,
The day is come, which, wert thou only happy,
Should render me supremely happy also.
Thy hair with nuptial coronal adorn'd,
Thy form enveloped in a festal robe,
I see indeed: but on thy countenance,
Thy looks, thy gestures, and in ev'ry step,
Pale melancholy lours. O Myrrha, he
Who loves thee more, far more than life itself,
Cannot behold thee with a mien like this
To an indissoluble tie approach.
This is the hour, the solemn hour is this,
When 'tis no more allowable for thee
To pass delusions on thyself, or others.
Thou shouldst divulge to me (whate'er it be)
The cause of thy distress; or shouldst at least
Confess that thou dost not confide in me;
That I have ill-responded to thy choice,
And that at heart thou hast repented of it.
I shall not hence account that I am wrong'd;
O no! though this sad heart will be surcharged
With mortal wretchedness. But, what car'st thou
For the distraction of a man not loved,
And slenderly esteem'd? It too much now
Concerns me not to render thee unhappy.—
Then speak to me explicitly and boldly.—
But, thou art mute and motionless? . . . Thy silence
Breathes but disdain and death . . . thy silence is
An answer too decisive: thou dost hate me;
And dar'st not say it . . . Now resume thy faith:
I instantly prepare myself to fly

For ever from thine eyes, since I am thus
An object of aversion . . . But if I
Was always so, how could I win thy choice?
If I became so afterwards, ah, tell me;
In what I have offended thee?
My. . . . O prince! . . .
Thy overweening love depicts my grief
More poignant than it is. Beyond the bounds
Of truth thy heated phantasy impels thee.
With silence thy unprecedented words
I hear; what wonder? unexpected things,
And little pleasing, and, e'en more than this,
Not true, dost thou express: how can I then
Reply to thee?—This, for our nuptial rites,
Is the appointed day; I come prepared
For their fulfilment; does my chosen spouse
Venture meanwhile to harbor doubts of me?
'Tis true, perchance my spirits are not radiant,
As hers should be who doth obtain a spouse
Distinguish'd like thyself: but pensiveness
Is oft a second nature; ill could one
Who feels its potent sway, explain the cause:
And often an officious questioning,
Instead of making manifest the cause,
Redoubles the effect.
Pe. I'm irksome to thee;
I see it by unquestionable symptoms.
I knew indeed that thou couldst never love me;
Yet in my feeble heart I had caress'd
At least the flatt'ring hope thou didst not hate me:
In time, for thine and my peace, I discern
That I deceived myself.—'Tis not (alas!)
Within my pow'r to make thee hate me not:
But on myself doth it alone depend
To make thee not despise me. Now art thou
Freed, and released from all thy promised faith.
Against thy will 'twere vain to keep thy promise:
Not by thy parents, and still less by me,
But by false shame, art thou restrain'd. Thou wouldst,
Not to incur the blame of fickleness,
Render thyself, thine own worst enemy,

The victim of thy error: and dost thou
Hope I should suffer this? Ah, no!—That I
Love thee, that I perchance deserved thee, this
I ought to prove now, by refusing thee . . .
My. Thou dost delight to drive me to despair . . .
Ah! how can I be joyous in thy presence,
If I am destined always to behold
Thy love ill-pleased with mine? Can I assign
The causes of a grief, which, in great measure,
Is but supposititious? which, indeed,
If true in part, p'rhaps has no other cause,
Than the new state which I'm about to enter;
The sad necessity of separation
From my belovèd parents; and the words
So oft repeated to myself: "Ah! maybe
I never more shall see them;" . . . the departure
For other realms unknown; the change of sky; . . .
And other thoughts, by thousands and by thousands,
All passionate and tender, and all sad;
And all indisputably better known,
And felt more keenly, than by any other,
By thy humane and courteous lofty heart!—
I gave myself spontaneously to thee:
Nor do I feel repentance; this I swear.
If it were so, I would have told it to thee:
Thee, above all men, I esteem: from thee
Nothing would I conceal, . . . that I would not
Likewise from my own consciousness conceal.
Now, I implore; let him who loves me best,
Speak to me least of this my wretchedness,
And 'twill in time, I feel assured, depart.
Could I, not prizing thee, give thee my hand,
I should despise myself: and how not prize thee? . . .
My lips could never utter what my heart
Doth not dictate: and yet those lips assure thee,
Swear to thee, that I never will belong
To any one but thee. What more can I
Profess to thee?
Pe. . . . Alas! I venture not
To ask of thee one thing, which, couldst thou say it,
Would give me life. But fatal the demand!

'Twere death, I fear, to be assured of this.—
Thou to be mine, then, dost not now disdain?
Dost not repent of it? and no delay? . . .
My. No; 'tis the day; to-day will I be thine.—
But, let our sails be hoisted to the winds
To-morrow, and for ever let us leave
These shores behind us.
Pe. Do I hear thee rightly?
With such abrupt transition how canst thou
Thus differ from thyself? It tortures thee
So much to have to leave thy parents dear,
Thy native country; yet wouldst thou depart
Thus speedily, for ever? . . .
My. Yes; . . . for ever
Will I abandon them; . . . and die . . . of grief . . .
Pe. What do I hear? Thy anguish hath betray'd thee; . . .
Thy words and looks are prompted by despair.
I swear that I will never be the means
Of thy destruction; never; of my own
Too certainly . . .
My. 'Tis true; 'tis too, too true;
I am distracted by a mighty woe . . .
But no, believe me not.—Inflexibly
I to my purpose keep.—While I have thus
My bosom harden'd as it were with grief,
My parting hence will be less keenly felt:
A solace in thyself . . .
Pe. No, Myrrha, no:
I am the cause, I am, (though innocent)
Of the dread conflict, which thus lacerates,
And agitates thy heart.—My hateful presence
No longer shall impose restraint on thee.—
Do thou thyself, O Myrrha, to thy parents
Propose some means, that may deliver thee
From ties so inauspicious; or from them
Thou'lt hear to-day the cruel death of Pereus.

Scene III.

MYRRHA.

My. Ah, go not to my parents!... Hear me,... hear me!...
He flies from me...—O Heav'ns! what have I said?
Let me to Eurycleia quickly run:
No, not one instant would I with myself
Remain alone...

Scene IV.

MYRRHA, EURYCLEIA.

Eu. O whither dost thou fly
Thus with such breathless haste, belovèd daughter?
My. Where can I find, if not in thee, some solace?...
To thee I came...
Eu. I, from a distance, long
Have watch'd thee carefully. Thou knowest well,
I never can abandon thee: I hope
That thou wilt pardon me. From thence I saw
Pereus rush troubled forth; and thee I find
With heavier grief oppress'd: ah! dearest daughter;
Thy tears at least may freely have a vent
Upon my breast.
My. Ah, yes; dear Eurycleia,
With thee I may at least shed tears... I feel
As if my heart would burst from checking them...
Eu. And wilt thou, in a state like this, persist,
O daughter, in these hymeneal rites?
My. I hope my agony may kill me first...
But no; that cannot be; the time's too short;...
It afterwards will kill me, kill me soon...
Death, death, I have no other wish but death;...
And death alone is all that I deserve.
Eu. —Myrrha, no other furies can assail
With such barbarity thy youthful breast,
Save those of love...
My. What dar'st thou say to me?
What cruel falsehood?...
Eu. Ah, do not, I pray thee,

Be wroth with me. For a long time I've thought so:
But if it thus displease thee, I will dare
No more to say it to thee. Ah, mayst thou
Preserve with me the liberty of weeping!
Neither do I know well if I believe
What I have said; moreover, to thy mother
I hitherto have solemnly denied it...

My. What do I hear? O Heav'ns! does she perchance
Also suspect it?...

Eu. And who, seeing thus
A tender maiden in excessive grief,
Would not deem love the origin of this?
Ah! were thy grief from love alone! at least
Some remedy might then be found.—Immersed
For a long time in this perplexing doubt,
I to the holy altar went one day
Of Venus, our sublime divinity;
With tears, with incense, and persuasive prayers,
With mournful heart, before her sacred image
Prostrate, I ventured to pronounce thy name...

My. Ah! what audacity! what hast thou done?
Venus?... O Heav'ns!... inimical to me...
The force of her implacable revenge...
What do I say?... Alas!... I shudder,... tremble...

Eu. 'Tis true indeed that I in this did wrong:
The angry deity disdain'd my vows;
The incense, in a smould'ring gloom involved,
With difficulty burn'd; and, downwards driven,
The smoke collected round my hoary head.
Wouldst thou hear further? I presumed to raise
To the stern image my afflicted eyes,
And, horribly incensed with indignation,
With threat'ning looks the goddess seem'd to me
Herself to drive me from her sacred feet.
With trembling steps, I totter'd from the temple,
Palsied with fear... In telling this, I feel
My hair with horror once more stand on end.

My. And thou with terror mak'st me also shudder.
What hast thou dared to do? By Myrrha now
Must no celestial pow'r, and much less that
Of our tremendous goddess, be invoked.
I am abandon'd by the gods; my breast

Is open to the onslaught of the Furies;
There they alone authority possess,
And residence.—Ah! if there still remains
In thee the shadow of a genuine pity,
My faithful Eurycleia, (thou alone
Canst do it,) save me from despair: 'tis slow,
Too slow, although 'tis infinite, my grief.
Eu. Thou mak'st me tremble... What can I?
My. ... I ask thee
My woes to shorten. My weak frame thou seeest
Wearing away by little and by little;
My ling'ring agonies destroy my parents;
A burden to myself, a curse to others,
I never can escape: 'twere pity, love,
To expedite my death; from thee I ask it...
Eu. O Heav'ns!... from me?... My very utt'rance fails,...
My breath,... my thoughts...
My. Ah, no; thou lov'st me not.
I weakly deem'd that in thy aged breast
There dwelt a comprehensive tenderness...
Yet thou thyself didst in my tender years
Exhort me to nobility of thought:
Oft have I heard from thee, how virtuous souls
Should death prefer to infamy. Alas!...
What do I say?...—But thou dost hear me not?...
Motionless,... mute,... thou scarcely breath'st! O Heav'ns!...
What have I said? distracted with my pangs,...
I know not what I said: ah! pardon me;
My second mother, be once more thyself.
Eu. ... O daughter, daughter!... Thou ask death from me?
Thou death from me?
My. Esteem me not ungrateful;
And think not that the anguish of my woes
Robs me of pity for the pangs of others.—
Wouldst thou not see me dead in Cyprus? soon
Thou'lt hear that I Epirus reach'd, a corpse.
Eu. 'Twere vain, then, to endure these dreadful nuptials.
I to thy parents fly to tell the whole...

My. Ah, do it not, or irretrievably
Thou forfeitest my love: ah, do it not;
I pray thee: in the name of thy true love,
I do conjure thee.—From a troubled heart
Accents escape, which should not be recorded.—
An ample solace (one which hitherto
I've not allow'd) hath been my tears with thee;
The speaking of my grief: in me already
My courage hence is doubled.—A few hours
Are wanting to the solemn nuptial rites:
Be ever near me: let us go: meanwhile,
It is thy province to confirm me more
In my inevitable lofty purpose.
Thou, by thy faithful counsel, and thy more
Than mother's love, at once shouldst strengthen me.
Thou shouldst so act, that firmly I may follow
The sole remaining honorable track.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CINYRAS, CECRIS.

Ce. There is no doubt that Pereus, though he be
Not yet return'd to us, by Myrrha's words
Was greatly mortified. She loves him *not*;
Of this I'm sure; she'll go to certain death,
If in these nuptials she should persevere.

Cin. For the last trial now, will we ourselves
Hear from her lips the truth. I, in thy name,
Have summon'd her to meet thee in this place.
Neither of us, in short, would force her will:
How much we love her, well she knows, to whom
Ourselves are not less dear. To me it seems
Now utterly impossible, that she,
In this respect, should close to us her heart;
To us, who made her arbitress and mistress
Not only of herself, but of ourselves.

Ce. Behold, she comes: and O! she seems to me

Somewhat more joyful; and her step more firm...
Ah! could she be again what once she was!
At the sole reappearance in her face
E'en of a flash of joy, I quickly seem
Restored once more to life.

Scene II.

MYRRHA, CINYRAS, CECRIS.

Ce. Belovèd daughter,
Ah, come to us! ah, come!
My. What do I see?
O Heav'ns! my father also!...
Cin. Haste, advance;
Our only hope and life; advance securely;
And do not fear the aspect of thy father,
More than thou fear'st thy mother's. We are both
Ready to hear thee. Now, if thou art pleased
The cause to tell us of thy cruel state,
Thou giv'st us life; but if it pleases thee
Rather to hide it, thou mayst also, daughter,
Conceal it; for thy pleasure will be ours.
Before the nuptial knot is tied for ever,
One hour alone is wanting; ev'ry one
Deems it a thing decided: but, if yet
Thy will is changed; if thy committed faith
Be irksome to thy heart; if thy free choice,
Though once spontaneous, be no longer such;
Be bold, fear nothing in the world, reveal
All the misgivings of thy heart to us.
Thou art by nothing bound; and we ourselves
The first release thee; and the gen'rous Pereus,
Worthy of thee, confirms this liberty.
Nor will we tax thee with inconstancy:
Rather will we admit, that thoughts mature,
Though unforeseen, constrain thee to this change.
By reasons base thou never canst be moved:
Thy noble character, thy lofty thoughts,
Thy love for us, full well we know them all:
A step of thee, and of thy blood unworthy,
Thou never couldst e'en think of. Freely, then,

Do thou fulfil thy wish; provided thou
Art once more happy, with that happiness
Thou renderest thy parents happy also.
Now, this thy present will, whate'er it be,
Do thou to us reveal it, as to brothers.
Ce. Ah, yes! thou see'st it well; for ne'er didst thou
Hear words of more persuasive tenderness,
More mild, more tender, from thy mother's lips
Than these.
My. . . . Is there a torment in the world,
That can compare with mine? . . .
Ce. But what is this?
Sighing, thou talkest to thyself?
Cin. Ah, let,
Ah, let thy heart speak to us: we will use
No other language with thee.—Quick, reply.
My. . . . My lord . . .
Cin. Ah, Myrrha, 'tis a sad beginning:
To thee I am a father; not a lord:
Canst thou invoke me with another name,
O daughter?
My. Myrrha, this is the last conflict.—
Be strong, my soul . . .
Ce. O Heav'ns! The hues of death
Upon her countenance . . .
My. On mine? . . .
Cin. But whence
Tremblest thou thus? at me? . . .
My. I tremble not . . .
Methinks; . . . or I, at least, no more shall tremble,
Since ye now so compassionately hear me.—
Your only, your too well beloved daughter,
Well know I that I am. I see you always,
My joys enjoying, grieving in my griefs;
E'en this my grief increases. Mine, alas!
Passes the bounds of natural distress;
In vain I hide it; and to you would speak it, . . .
If I knew it myself. My fatal sadness
With growing years augmented ev'ry day,
Long ere, amid the' illustrious company
Of noble suitors, Pereus I selected.

Within my breast an angry deity,
Unknown, inexorable, dwells; and hence,
All pow'r of mine is vain against his pow'r . . .
Mother, believe me; though I be but young,
My mind, e'en passing ordinary strength,
Was, and is, strong: but my distemper'd frame
Is fast succumbing; . . . and I feel myself,
With gradual footsteps, tott'ring to the tomb . . .
—My rare and little food to me is poison:
Sleep everlastingly forsakes my pillow;
Or dreams, with horrid images of death,
Give greater martyrdom than sleepless nights:
I do not find, throughout the day or night,
A moment's peace, repose, or resting place.
Yet nothing in the shape of human comfort
Do I presume to covet; death I deem,
Expect, solicit, as my only cure.
But, for my punishment, still Nature keeps me,
With her strong ties, alive. I pity now,
And now I hate, myself: I weep, and rave,
And weep again . . . This, this is the incessant,
Insufferable, fierce vicissitude,
In which I drag along my heavy days.—
But what? . . . do ye, too, at my horrid state
Shed tears? . . . Belovèd mother! . . . let me then,
To thy breast clinging, drinking in thy tears,
Forego the sense of suff'ring for a moment! . . .
Ce. Belovèd daughter, at a tale like this,
Who could refrain from weeping? . . .
Cin. At her words
I feel my bosom rent . . . But finally,
What ought we now to do? . . .
My. But finally,
(Ah! trust to what I say,) I ne'er conceived
The wish to vex you, or extort from you
Vain pity for myself, describing thus
My fierce unutterable pangs.—When I,
By choosing Pereus, fix'd my destiny,
At first, 'tis true, I to myself appear'd
Somewhat less troubled; but, within my heart
Proportionably fierce my grief return'd,

As nearer and more near the day approach'd
For forming the indissoluble tie;
So much so, that three times indeed I dared
To beg you to procrastinate the day.
In these delays I somewhat calm'd myself;
But, as the time diminish'd, all my pangs
Resumed their wonted fierceness. To their height,
To my consummate shame, consummate grief,
Are they to-day arrived: but something tells me
That they, to-day, are giving in my breast
The last proof of their strength. This day shall see me
The spouse of Pereus, or a breathless corpse.
Ce. What do I hear? ... O daughter! ... Wilt thou thus
In these lugubrious nuptials persevere? ...
Cin. No, this shall never be. Thou lov'st not Pereus;
And, spite of inclination, thou, in vain,
Wouldst give thyself to him ...
My. Ah, do not ye
Take me from him; or quickly give me death ...
'Tis true, perchance, I love him not as much
As he loves me; ... and yet, of this I doubt ...
Believe, that I sufficiently esteem him;
And that no other man in all the world,
If he have not, shall ever have my hand.
I hope that Pereus, as he ought to be,
Will to my heart be dear; by living with him
In constant and inseparable faith,
I hope that he will make both peace and joy
Return to me again: that life may be
Still dear to me, and peradventure happy.
Ah! if I hitherto have loved him not
As he deserves, 'tis not a fault of mine,
But rather of my state; which makes me first
Abhor myself ... Him have I chosen once:
And now, again I choose him: long for him,
Solicit him, and him alone. My choice
Beyond expression to yourselves was grateful:
Be then, as ye did wish, as now I wish,
The whole accomplish'd. Since I show myself
Superior to my grief, do ye so likewise.

As joyfully as may be, soon will I
Come to the nuptials: ye will find yourselves
Some day made happy by them.
Ce. O rare daughter!
How many true perfections thou unitest!
Cin. Thy words a little calm me; but I tremble...
My. I feel, while thus in conference with you,
My strength return. I may again perchance
Wholly become the mistress of myself,
(If the gods will,) provided ye will lend
Me your assistance.
Cin. What assistance?
Ce. Speak!
We will do ev'ry thing.
My. I am constrain'd
Once more to grieve you. Hear.—To my worn breast,
And to my troubled, weak, distemper'd mind,
The sight of objects new to me will prove
A potent remedy; and this will be
Effectual in proportion as 'tis speedy.
What it will cost me to abandon you,
(O Heav'ns!) I cannot say; my tears will tell it,
When I bid you the terrible farewell:
If, without falling lifeless,... in thy arms,
I can, O mother, do it...But, if yet
I can abandon you, the day will come,
When, to this gen'rous effort, I shall owe
Life, peace, and happiness.
Ce. Dost thou thus speak
Of leaving us? Wouldst do it instantly?
At once dost fear and wish to do it? Whence
Such inconsistency?...
Cin. Abandon us?...
And what remains to us, if reft of thee?
Thou mayst at leisure afterwards depart
To Pereus' father; but meanwhile ere this
With us enjoy protracted happiness...
My. If here I cannot possibly be happy,
Would ye prefer to see me dead in Cyprus,
Or know me happy on a foreign shore?—
Sooner, or later, to Epirus' realm

My destiny invites me: there should I
With Pereus finally abide. To you,
When Pereus his paternal sceptre sways,
One day will we return. Ye shall again
In Cyprus see me, if the gods so grant,
The joyful mother of a num'rous offspring:
And we will leave to you, of all my children,
The one ye may love best, to be the prop
Of your declining years. Thus of your blood
Shall ye possess an heir to this rich realm;
Since offspring of the stronger sex, the gods
Have hitherto denied to you. Then ye,
The day on which ye suffer'd me to go,
Will be the first to hail with blessings.—Ah,
Grant that to-morrow Pereus may with me
Spread to the wind our sails. Within my heart
I feel a certain and tremendous presage,
That I, if ye prohibit my departure,
Alas! within this inauspicious palace,
To-day the hapless victim will remain
Of an inscrutable and unknown power:
That ye will lose me everlastingly...
Do ye, I pray, compassionately yield
To my unhappy presage; or be pleased,
Indulging my distemper'd phantasy,
To second what perchance ye deem an error.
My life, my destiny, and also (Heav'ns!
I shudder as I speak) your destiny,
All, all, too much depend on my departure.

Ce. O daughter!...

Cin. Ah!... Thy accents make us tremble...
But yet, if such thy will, so be it done.
Whate'er may be my grief, I would prefer
Never to see thee, than to see thee thus.—
And thou, sweet consort, standest motionless,
In tears?... Consentest thou to her desire?

Ce. Ah! could her absence kill me, as (alas!)
I feel assured that I shall hence be doom'd
In tears to live disconsolate for ever!...
Ah! might the augury prove one day true,
Which she suggested of her precious offspring!...

But yet, since such is her fantastic wish,
So that she lives, let it be gratified.
My. Belovèd mother, now thou givest me
Life for the second time. Within an hour
Shall I be ready for the nuptial rites.
Whether I love you, time will prove to you;
Though now I seem impatient to forsake you.—
Now, for a little while, do I retire
To my apartments: fain would I appear
With tearless eyes before the altar; meeting
My noble spouse with brow serene, and cheerful.

Scene III.

CINYRAS, CECRIS.

Ce. Unhappy parents we! unhappy daughter!...
Cin. Yet, to behold her ev'ry day more sad,
My heart hath not the firmness. 'Twere in vain
To be opposed...
Ce. O spouse!... A thousand fears
Invade my heart, lest her excess of grief,
When she is parted from us, should destroy her.
Cin. From her expressions, from her looks, and gestures,
And also from her sighs, it seems to me
That by some superhuman agency
She's fearfully possess'd.
Ce. ... Ah! well I know,
Implacable, vindictive Venus, well,
Thy rigorous revenge. Thus dost thou make me
Atone for my irrev'rent arrogance.
But innocent my daughter was; I only
Was the delinquent; I alone the culprit...
Cin. O Heav'ns! what hast thou dared against the goddess?...
Ce. Unhappy I!... Hear, Cinyras, my fault.—
When I beheld myself the spouse adored
Of one who was so loving as a husband,
A man for captivating grace unequall'd,
And by him mother of an only daughter,
(For beauty, modesty, and sense, and grace
Throughout the world unrivall'd,) I confess,

Intoxicated with my happy lot,
I dared deny to Venus, I alone,
Her tributary incense. Wouldst thou more?
Insensate, and extravagant, at last
To such a pitch (alas, how ill-advised!)
Of madness I arrived, that from my lips
I suffer'd the imprudent boast to fall,
That by the wondrous, celebrated beauty
Of Myrrha, now more votaries were drawn
From Asia and from Greece, than heretofore
Were e'er attracted to her sacred isle,
By warm devotion to the Cyprian queen.
Cin. O! what is this thou say'st? . . .
Ce. Lo, from that day
Henceforward, Myrrha lost her peace; her life,
Her beauty, like frail wax before the fire,
Slowly consumed; and nothing in our hands
From that time seem'd to prosper. Afterwards
What did I not attempt to soothe the goddess?
What prayers, what tears, what penitential rites
Have I not lavish'd? evermore in vain.
Cin. Ill hast thou done, O woman; and still worse
Hath been thy guilt, in keeping it from me.
A father wholly innocent, perchance
I might, by means of mediatorial rites,
The pardon of the goddess have obtain'd:
And yet perchance (I hope) I may succeed.—
But meanwhile, now indeed do I concur
In Myrrha's judgment: that we must perforce,
And with what promptitude we can effect it,
Remove her from this consecrated isle.
Who knows? perchance the anger of the goddess
Will not to other climes pursue her: hence
Our wretched daughter, feeling in her breast
Such strange forebodings, yearns perchance so deeply
For her departure, on it founds such hopes.—
But Pereus comes: he's welcome: he alone,
By taking her away from us, can now
For us our daughter save.
Ce. O destiny!

Scene IV.

CINYRAS, PERŒUS, CECRIS.

Pe. Tardy, irresolute, and apprehensive,
And full of mortal wretchedness, ye see me.
A bitter conflict lacerates my heart:
I have, by pity and a genuine love
Of others, not of self, been conquer'd. This
Will cost my life. No otherwise this grieves me,
Than that I thus have forfeited the power
To spend it in your service: but I will not,
No, I will never drag to hopeless death
My dearest Myrrha. The disastrous tie
Shall now be torn asunder; and, with that,
The thread of my existence.
Cin. O my son!...
Still by this name I call thee; and I hope
That thou ere long will be my son indeed.
We, since thyself, have heard explicitly
The secret thoughts of Myrrha: I have taken,
As a true father, ev'ry means with her,
So that she now, with absolute free will,
Her own unbiass'd judgment may pursue.
But 'mid the winds the rock is not so firm,
As she is firm to thee: thee, thee, alone
She wills, and she solicits; and she fears
Lest thou be taken from her. She knows not
Herself how to adduce to us a cause
For her despondency: her health infirm,
Which was the first effect of this, perchance
Is now its only cause. But her deep grief
Deserves much pity, be it what it may;
Nor should she wake in thee, more than in us,
Any dissatisfaction. A sweet solace
Thou of her ills wilt be: on thy firm love
Her hopes are founded all. What stronger proof
Wouldst thou require than this? she will herself
At ev'ry risk abandon us to-morrow;
(Us, who so dearly love her!) and for this,
The reason given is to be with thee
More absolutely, to become more thine.

Pe. Ah, could I trust to this! but specially
This her abrupt departure... Ah, I tremble,
Lest she in thought designs the instrument
To make me of her death.
Ce. To thee, O Pereus,
Do we confide her: fate to-day decrees it.
Too certainly, before our very eyes,
Here would she lifeless fall, if to her will
Our hearts permitted us to persevere
In opposition. Change of place and scene
Potently operates on youthful minds.
Then lay aside all inauspicious thoughts;
And think alone of making her more happy.
Bring to thy countenance its wonted joy;
And, by avoiding mention of her grief,
Soon wilt thou see that grief itself subside.
Pe. May I believe, then, certainly believe,
That Myrrha hates me not?
Cin. From me thou mayst
Believe it, yes! What heretofore I said,
Remember; by her words I'm now convinced,
That, far from being cause of her distress,
She deems these nuptials her sole remedy.
She must be treated with indulgence; thus
She will submit to anything. Go thou;
Quickly prepare thyself for festive pomp;
And at the same time ev'rything dispose,
For taking from us by to-morrow's dawn
Our much-loved daughter. We will not assemble
Before the altar of the public temple,
In sight of all the dwellers here in Cyprus;
For the long rite would be an obstacle
To such a quick departure. We will chant
The hymeneal anthems in this palace.
Pe. Thou hast restored me suddenly to life.
I fly; and here will instantly return.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

EURYCLEIA, MYRRHA.

My. Dear Eurycleia, yes: thou seeest me
Completely tranquillized; and almost joyous,
At my resolved departure.
Eu. Can this be?...
Alone with Pereus wilt thou hence depart?...
Nor, of so many of thy faithful handmaids,
Wilt thou select e'en one? Not even me
Wilt thou distinguish from this wide neglect?...
What will become of me, my dearest child,
If thou abandon me? alas! I feel
Ready to die at the mere thought of this...
My. Ah! hold thy peace... One day I shall return...
Eu. Ah! may the Heav'ns grant this! Belovèd daughter!...
I did not think that thou wert capable
Of such a stern resolve: I always hoped
That thou at last wouldst close my dying eyes...
My. I should have chosen thee, and thee alone,
If I, by any means, could have resolved
To take an inmate of this palace with me...
But on this point am I inflexible...
Eu. And at to-morrow's dawn thou go'st from hence?...
My. I from my parents have at length obtain'd
Permission to do this; the rising sun
Will see our vessel wafted from this shore.
Eu. Auspicious be the day to thee!... Could I
Know thou wert only happy!... 'Tis, in truth,
A cruel and a mortifying joy,
That thou dost manifest in leaving us...
Yet, if it please thee, I will weep, though mute,
With thy afflicted mother...
My. Wherefore thus
My heart already too assailable
Dost thou assail?... Why force me thus to weep?...

Eu. And how can I suppress my bursting tears?...
This is the last time that I shall behold,
And shall embrace thee. Thou forsakest me,
With many years bow'd down, and still more bow'd
With wretchedness. I shall be in my grave
At thy return, if that should ever be:
Some tears, I hope that... thou at least wilt give...
To the remembrance... of thy Eurycleia...

My. For pity's sake... O! quit me; or at least
Be silent.—I command thee; hold thy peace.
It is my duty now to be to all
Inflexible; and chiefly to myself.—
This is a day to nuptial joy devoted.
Now, if thou e'er hast loved me, I require
Of thee to-day the last hard proof of this;
Restrain thy tears,... and mine.—I see already
My spouse approaching. Let all grief be mute.

SCENE II.

PEREUS, MYRRHA, EURYCLEIA.

Pe. Thy father, Myrrha, hath transported me
With unexpected joy: my destiny,
Which I expected trembling, he himself
Hath cheerfully announced to me as happy.
Since thou wilt have it so, to-morrow's dawn,
At thy command, shall see my sails unfurl'd.
At least I'm pleased that both thy parents yield
Contentedly and placidly to this:
For me no other pleasure can there be,
Save that of satisfying thy desires.

My. Yes, much-loved spouse; for by this tender name
Already I accost thee; if a wish
My bosom ever fervently inspired,
I am all-burning at the break of day
To go from hence, in company with thee,
And so I will. To find myself at once
With thee alone; no longer to behold
Display'd before my sight the many objects
So long the witnesses, perchance the cause,
Of my distress; to sail in unknown seas;

To land in countries hitherto unseen;
To breathe a fresh invigorating air;
And evermore to witness at my side,
Beaming with exultation, and with love,
A spouse like thee; all this, I am convinced,
Will in a short time make me once again
Such as I used to be. Less irksome then
I trust that I shall be to thee. Meanwhile,
My state will stand in need of some indulgence;
But, be assured that this will not last long.
My grief, if never to my mind recall'd,
Will be eradicated soon. Do thou,
Of my abandon'd and paternal realm,
Of my disconsolate and childless parents,
In short, of nothing, that was once my own,
Once precious to my heart, remind me ever,
Nor even breathe to me their thrilling names.
This, this will be the only remedy
That will for ever staunch the bitter fount
Of my all-fearful, never-ceasing tears.

Pe. Strange and unparallel'd is thy design,
O Myrrha: ah, may Heav'n in mercy grant
That thou mayst not, when 'tis too late, repent it!—
Yet, though my heart the flatt'ring thought admits not
Of being dear to thee, I am resolved
Blindly to execute each wish of thine.
Provided that my destiny decrees
That I should ne'er be worthy of thy love,
My life, which only for thy sake I keep,
(That life which I had sacrificed already
With my own hand, if I had been to-day
Forced to relinquish thee,) this life of mine,
Since for this sacred purpose thou hast deign'd
To make a choice of me, I consecrate
For ever to thy grief. To weep with thee,
If thou shouldst wish it; with festivity,
And mirthful sports, to make the time pass by
With lighter wings, and cheat thee of thy cares;
With care unceasing, to anticipate
All thy desires; to show myself at all times,
Whichever most thou wishest me to be,

Thy husband, lover, brother, friend, or servant;
Behold, to what I pledge myself: in this,
And this alone, my glory and my life
Will all be centred. Yet, by this unmoved,
If thou canst never love me, still, methinks,
I cannot be the object of thy hate.
My. What say'st thou? Learn, ah! better learn to know,
Better to value Myrrha and thyself.
To thy so numerous endowments, thou
Addest such boundless love, that thou deservest
A far, far diff'rent object to myself.
Love in my bosom will enshrine his fires,
When he has clear'd it of its blighting tears.
An ample and indubitable proof
Of this, thou'lt find, in seeing that to-day
I choose thee as the healer of my woes;
That I esteem thee, that with lofty voice
I hail thee as my only true deliv'rer.
Pe. Thou dost inflame me with excessive joy:
Never till now did accents sweet as these
Flow from thy beauteous lips: within my heart
Engraved in characters of fire they live.—
Behold, the priests, and all the festal train,
And our dear parents, hither come. My spouse,
Ah! may this moment be to thee propitious,
As it is now the brightest of my life!

Scene III.

Priests, Chorus of Children, Maidens, and old Men; Cinyras, Cecris, People, Myrrha, Pereus, Eurycleia.

Cin. Belovèd children, I infer, at least,
A joyful augury from seeing you
Going before us to the sacred rite.
On thy face, Pereus, transport is express'd;
And I behold my daughter's countenance
Serene and resolute. The deities
With looks benign assuredly regard us.—
With copious incense be the altars heap'd;
Peal forth the song, to make the gods propitious;

And let your grateful and devoted hymns
In sounding accents echo to the skies.

CHORUS.[1]

Hymen, benignant deity, of Love
The brother, of frail man the soothing friend;
On us propitiously do thou descend;
And bid henceforth these happy votaries prove
A flame so pure from thy inspiring breath,
That nothing may extinguish it, but death.—

CHILDREN.

Come to us, Hymen, with triumphant joy;
Borne on thy brother's wings, descend below;

MAIDENS.

With his own craft deceive the treach'rous boy,
Rob him of darts, of quiver, and of bow.

OLD MEN.

But do thou come exempt from all his arts,
His soft caprices, and insidious sighs:

CHORUS.

And deign, O Hymen, to unite two hearts,
In mutual love unmatch'd, with thy firm ties.

Eu. Daughter, what ails thee? dost thou tremble? ...
Heav'ns! ...
My. Peace ... peace ...
Eu. But yet ...
My. No, no; I do not tremble.—

CHORUS.

Mother sublime of Hymen, and of Love,
A goddess e'en among the gods art thou;
Whose high supremacy in heav'n above,
Or in the earth, none dare to disavow;

[1] In case the Chorus should not sing, each stanza should be preceded by a short symphony adapted to the words, which should then be recited.

From old Olympus' heights, O Venus, deign
Upon this pair propitiously to smile;
If e'er the rites of this thy sacred isle
Thy kind protection haply might obtain.

CHILDREN.

Those peerless charms from thee derive their birth,
Bestow'd on Myrrha with such lavish wealth;

MAIDENS.

Restoring her once more to joy and health,
Be pleased to leave thy image on the earth;

OLD MEN.

Lastly, make her the mother of a race
So noble, that their father may confess,
Grandsires, and subjects, that past wretchedness
Is all forgotten in their matchless grace.—

CHORUS.

Benignant goddess, gloriously unfold,
From the pure azure of the heav'nly height,
Drawn by thy swans with plumes of downy white,
Throned in thy chariot of translucent gold,
Thy form majestical; and by thy side
Have thy two sons; thy rosy veil so fair,
As at thy shrine they kneel, cast o'er this pair,
And let two bodies one sole spirit hide.

Ce. Yes, daughter, yes; with meek subserviency
Thou always soughtest to secure the favor
Of our all-pow'rful goddess ... But, alas! ...
Thy count'nance changes? ... Thou art faint, and trembling? ...
And scarce thy falt'ring knees ...
My. For pity's sake,
Do not, O mother, with thy accents bring
My constancy to too severe a test:
I cannot answer for my countenance; ...
But this I know, the purpose of my heart
Is steady and immutable.

Eu. I feel
As if, for her, I were about to die.
Pe. Ah! more and more her countenance is troubled?...
O what a tremor now assaults my frame!—

CHORUS.

Pure Faith, and Concord, lasting and divine,
Have placed in this fond couple's breast their shrine;
And fell Alecto, and her sisters dread,
In vain their torches' lurid glare would shed
On the brave bosom of the bride so fair,
Whose praises all our pow'r exceed:
While deadly Discord, frantic with despair,
Upon himself in vain doth feed . . .

My. What is it that ye say? My heart already
By all the baneful Furies is assail'd.
See them; the rabid sisters round me glare
With sable torches, and with snaky scourge:
Behold the torches, which these nuptials merit . . .
Cin. O Heav'ns! what do I hear?
Ce. My child, thou ravest . . .
Pe. O fatal rites! ye ne'er shall be perform'd . . .
My. —But what? the hymns have ceased?... Who to his breast
Thus clasps me? Where am I? What have I said?
Am I a spouse already? . . .
Pe. Thou art not,
Myrrha, espoused; nor shalt thou ever be
The spouse of Pereus: this I swear to thee.
Not less intense, but different to thine,
The execrable Furies tear my heart.
Thou hast made me a fable to the world;
And to myself, e'en more than I'm to thee,
An object of abhorrence: I for this
Will not make thee unhappy. Thou hast now,
Though 'gainst thy will, in full betray'd thyself:
And thou hast finally beyond all doubt
Proved the invincible and long aversion,
Which thou hast cherish'd tow'rds me. Both are happy,
That thou hast thus betray'd thyself in time!

Now from the self-imposed and hated yoke
Art thou released for ever. Safe art thou,
And from all ties exempt. Henceforth will I
Remove for ever from thy troubled sight
My odious presence . . . Satisfied, and happy,
I'll make thee now . . . Ere long shalt thou be told
What was the last resource of him who lost thee.

Scene IV.

CINYRAS, MYRRHA, CECRIS, EURYCLEIA, PRIESTS, CHORUS, PEOPLE.

Cin. The rite is now profaned; hence, hence this pomp,
This ineffectual pomp; let all hymns cease.
Meanwhile, O priests, withdraw elsewhere. I fain
(Unhappy sire!) would weep at least unseen.

Scene V.

CINYRAS, MYRRHA, CECRIS, EURYCLEIA.

Eu. Ah! far more dead than living, Myrrha stands:
See ye that I can scarce support her form?
O daughter! . . .
Cin. Women, leave her to herself
A prey, and to her own flagitious Furies.
She, with her unexampled waywardness,
Spite of myself, at last hath render'd me
Inflexible and cruel: for her state
No more I feel compassion. She herself,
Almost against the wishes of her parents,
Would to the altar come: and *this* alone
To shame us with her own disgrace and ours? . . .
Thou too compassionate, deluded *mother*,
Leave her: if hitherto we were not stern,
The day at length is come to be so.
My. Yes:
'Tis as it should be: Cinyras, be thou
With me inexorable; for nought else
I wish; nought else I will. He, he alone
Can terminate the bitter martyrdom
Of an unhappy and unworthy daughter.—

Plunge thou within my breast that vengeful sword,
Which now is hanging idly by thy side:
Thou gavest me this wretched, hateful life;
Take thou it from me: lo! the last, last gift
For which I supplicate thee . . . Ah, reflect,
If thou thyself, and with thy own right hand,
Dost not destroy me, thou reservest me
To perish by my own, and for nought else.
Cin. O daughter! . . .
Ce. O sad words! . . . O speechless anguish! . . .
Ah! thou'rt a father; thou a father art; . . .
Wherefore exasperate her? . . . Is she not
Sufficiently afflicted? . . . Thou see'st clearly
That she is scarce the mistress of herself;
Her reason sinks beneath her mighty anguish . . .
Eu. O Myrrha . . . daughter, . . . dost thou hear me not? . . .
My tears, . . . prevent . . . my utterance . . .
Cin. O state! . . .
By such a dreadful sight I am o'ercome . . .
Ah! yes, I am e'en yet too much a father;
And of all fathers most unfortunate . . .
Already by compassion, more than rage,
Am I possess'd. I will betake myself
Elsewhere to weep. Watch over her, meanwhile.—
As soon as she shall have regain'd her reason,
She must prepare to hear her father speak.

Scene VI.

CECRIS, MYRRHA, EURYCLEIA.

Eu. Ah see, once more her senses she resumes . . .
Ce. Leave me alone with her, good Eurycleia;
I would speak to her.

Scene VII.

CECRIS, MYRRHA.

My. —Has my father gone? . . .
He, then, he will not kill me? . . . Ah, do thou
In pity, mother, give to me a sword;

Ah, yes; if there indeed remains in thee
The shadow of thy love for me, a sword
Give me thyself, without delay. I am
In full possession of my faculties;
And well I know the mighty consequence
Of this my fervent prayer: ah, trust for once
My judgment; trust it while there yet is time:
Thou wilt repent hereafter, but in vain,
If thou to-day dost grant me not a sword.

Ce. Belovèd child, . . . O Heav'ns! . . . assuredly
From grief thou ravest. From thy mother thou
Wouldst never ask a sword . . .—Now, let us speak
No more of nuptial rites: a strength of mind
Not to be parallel'd, hath led thee on
To execute thy promise; but, in truth,
Stronger than self was nature: fervently
For this I thank the gods. Thou shalt be ever
Clasp'd in the arms of thy indulgent mother:
And if to endless tears thou'rt self-condemn'd,
I will weep also evermore with thee,
Nor ever, even for an instant, leave thee:
We will be one in all things; e'en thy grief,
Since it will not abandon thee, will I
Appropriate to myself. And thou shalt find
In me a sister, rather than a mother . . .
But what, O Heav'ns, is this? . . . Belovèd child, . . .
Art thou incensed 'gainst me? . . . repellest me? . . .
Refusest to embrace me? and dost dart
Indignant and exasperated looks? . . .
Alas! O daughter, . . . e'en towards thy mother? . . .

My. Ah! too much it increases my despair,
Even the seeing thee; thou, more and more,
Rendest my heart when thou embracest me . . .—
Alas! . . . what do I say? . . . Belovèd mother! . . .
A vile, ungrateful, and unworthy daughter
Am I, who love deserve not. Leave thou me
To my dire destiny; . . .—or if thou feel
For me true pity, I repeat it to thee,
Kill me.

Ce. Ah, rather should I kill myself,
If I were doom'd to lose thee: cruel one!

Canst thou speak to me, and repeat to me
So horrible a wish?—I rather will
From this hour forth perpetually watch
Over thy life.
My. Thou, thou watch o'er my life?
Must I, at ev'ry instant, I, behold thee?
Thou evermore before my eyes? Ah, first
I will that these same eyes of mine be closed
In everlasting darkness: I myself
With these my very hands would pluck them first
From my own face...
Ce. O Heav'ns! What hear I?... Heav'ns!...
Thou mak'st me shudder. Then thou hatest me?...
My. Thou first, thou sole, eternal, fatal cause
Of all my wretchedness...
Ce. What words are these?...
O daughter!... I the cause?... But, see, thy tears
Gush forth in torrents...
My. Pardon, pardon me!...
It is not I that speak; an unknown power
Rules my distemper'd organs... Dearest mother!
Too much thou lovest me; and I...
Ce. Dost thou
Deem me the cause?...
My. Yes, thou, alas! hast been,
In giving life to such an impious wretch,
The cause of all my woes: and art so still,
If thou refusest now to take it from me;
Now that I importune thee for this deed
So fervently. There yet is time for this;
Still am I innocent, almost...—But, O!...
Against such agonies... my... languid... frame...
No more bears up... My strength,... my senses fail me...
Ce. To thy apartments suffer me to lead thee.
Thou need'st some cordial to restore thy strength;
This transient frenzy, trust me, hath arisen
From too long fasting. Ah, come thou; in me
Fully confide: I, I alone will serve thee.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CINYRAS.

Cin. O ill-starr'd, wretched Pereus! Too true lover!...
Ah, had I been more swift in my arrival,
Thou hadst not then perchance within thy breast
The fatal weapon buried.—O great Heav'ns!
What will his poor bereavèd father say?
Espoused and joyful he expected him;
Now will he see him brought before his eyes,
By his own hands destroy'd, a lifeless corpse.—
But I, alas! am I then less than he
Despairing as a father? Is this life,
The state in which, amid atrocious furies,
The frantic Myrrha pines? and is this life,
To which we're doom'd by her mysterious pangs?—
But I will question her; and I have arm'd
My heart in iron mail. She well deserves
(And this she knows) my anger; as a proof,
She tardily obeys my summons hither:
Yet, my command hath she already heard
By the third messenger.—Assuredly
Beneath these pangs of hers there is conceal'd
Some secret no less dreadful than important.
I, from her lips, will now hear all the truth,
Or never, never more will I henceforth
Admit her to my presence... But, (O Heav'ns!)
If she's condemn'd to everlasting tears,
Though innocent, by force of destiny,
And by the anger of offended gods,
Should I to such calamities as these
Add the displeasure of a father? Should I,
Despairing, and despised, abandon her
To ling'ring death?... Alas! at such a thought
My heart doth break... But, yet, in part, at least,
'Tis indispensable that I should hide,
From her, in this my last experiment,
My boundless fondness. Never hath she yet

Heard me address her in reproachful terms:
No maiden surely hath a heart so firm,
As may suffice to hear without emotion
The unaccustom'd menace of a father,—
At length she comes.—Alas, how she approaches
With tardy and reluctant steps! It seems
As if she came to die before my eyes.

Scene II.

CINYRAS, MYRRHA.

Cin. —Myrrha, I never, never could have thought
That thou regardedst not thy father's honor;
Thou hast too certainly of this convinced me
On this day fatal to us all: but yet,
That thou shouldst now reluctantly obey
Thy sire's express and oft-repeated summons,
E'en this was less expected than the other.
My. ... Thou of my life art arbiter supreme ...
I did implore from thee ... myself, ... erewhile, ...
And on this very spot, ... the punishment ...
Of my so many, ... and enormous faults ... —
My mother, too, was present; ... wherefore then ...
Didst thou not kill me? ...
Cin. It is time, O Myrrha,
Yes, it is time to alter thy deportment.
In vain thou usest accents of despair;
In vain despairing and confounded looks
Thou fixest on the ground. Through all thy grief,
Alas, too evidently shame appears;
Guilty thou feel'st thyself. Thy heaviest fault,
Is thy concealment with thy father: hence
His anger thoroughly thou meritest;
And that the partial and indulgent love
I bore to thee, my dear and only daughter,
Henceforth should cease.—But what? thy tears gush forth?
Thou tremblest? shudderest? ... and thou art silent?—
Would, then, thy father's anger be to thee
An insupportable infliction?
My. Ah! ...
Worse ... than the worst of deaths ...

Cin. Hear me.—Thou hast
Render'd thy parents, as thou hast thyself,
A fable to the world, by the sad end
Which thou hast given to thy nuptial rites.
Thy cruel outrage has cut short already
The days of wretched Pereus . . .
My. Heav'ns! what hear I?
Cin. Yes, dead is Pereus; and 'tis thou hast slain him.
Soon as he left our presence, he withdrew,
Alone, and by mute anguish overwhelm'd,
To his apartments: no man durst pursue him.
Too late, alas! I came . . . He lay, transfix'd
By his own dagger, in a sea of blood:
To me, his eyes bedimm'd with tears, and death,
He raised; . . . and, 'mid his latest sighs, he breathed
The name of Myrrha from his lips.—Ungrateful . . .
My. Ah, say no more to me . . . I, I alone
Deserve to breathe my last . . . And yet I live?
Cin. The horrid anguish of the wretched father
Of Pereus, I alone can comprehend,
I, who at once am wretched and a father:
Hence, I'm aware what now must be his rage,
His hatred, and his thirst to wreak on us
A just and bitter vengeance.—Hence, not moved
By terror of his arms, but by a just
Compassion for his son, I am resolved
To know from thee, as doth befit a father
Offended and deceived, (and at all risks
Do I insist on this,) the real cause
Of such a horrible catastrophe.—
Myrrha, in vain wouldst thou conceal it from me:
Thou by thy each least gesture art betray'd.—
Thy broken words; the changes of thy face,
Now dyed with scarlet, and with hues of death
Now blanch'd; thy mute and bosom-heaving sighs;
The ling'ring hectic that consumes thy frame;
Thy restless glances, indirect and stolen;
Thy dumb confusion; and the cleaving shame,
And blushing consciousness that ne'er forsakes thee: . . .
Ah! all that I behold in thee persuades me,
And ineffectual thy denial is, . . .
That these thy furies all . . . love's children are.

My. I? . . . love's? . . . Ah, think it not! . . . Thou art deceived.

Cin. The more that thou deniest it, the more
Am I convinced of this. And I, alas!
Am but too well assured, that this thy flame,
Which thou so pertinaciously dost hide,
To some degrading object owes its birth.

My. Alas! . . . what art thou thinking? . . . Thou wilt not
Destroy me with thy sword; . . . and thou meanwhile . . .
Destroyest me with words . . .

Cin. And darest thou
Assert to me that thou'rt untouch'd by love?
And shouldst thou tell me so, and even dare
Also to swear it, I should deem thee perjured.—
But who is ever worthy of thy heart,
If Pereus, true, incomparable lover,
Could not indeed obtain it?—But so fierce
Are thy emotions; . . . such thy agitation;
So conscious and so passionate thy shame;
And in such terrible vicissitudes
The conflict of these passions is engraved
Upon thy countenance, that all in vain
Thy lips deny the charge . . .

My. Ah, wouldst thou then . . .
E'en in thy presence . . . make me . . . die . . . of shame? . . .
And thou a father?

Cin. And wouldst thou with cruel,
Inflexible, and unavailing silence,
Poison, and prematurely terminate
The days of a fond father who doth love thee
Far better than himself?—I'm yet a father:
Banish thy fear; whatever be thy flame,
(So that I once might see thee happy) I,
If thou confess it to me, for thy sake,
Am capable of any sacrifice.
I saw, and still I see (unhappy daughter!)
The struggle generous and horrible,
Which tears thy heart to pieces betwixt love
And duty. Thou hast done too much already,
To sense of right self-sacrificed: but love,
More pow'rful than thyself, forbids the off'ring.

Passion may be excused; its impulses
Oft foil our best endeavors to resist them;
But to withhold thy secret from thy father,
Who prays for, who commands, thy confidence,
Admits of no excuse.

My. —O death, O death,
Whom I so much invoke, wilt thou still be
Deaf to my grief?...

Cin. Ah, daughter, try to calm,
Ah, try to calm thy heart: if thou wilt not
Make me hereafter more incensed against thee,
I am already almost pacified;
Provided thou wilt speak to me. Ah, speak
To me, as to a brother. Even I
Love by experience know: the name...

My. O Heav'ns!...
I love, yes; since thou forcest me to say it;
I desperately love, and love in vain.
But, who's the object of that hopeless passion,
Nor thou, nor any one, shall ever know:
He knows it not himself... and even I
Almost deny it to myself.

Cin. And I
Both will, and ought to know it. Nor canst thou
Be cruel to thyself, except thou be
At the same time still more so to thy parents,
Who thee adore, thee only. Speak, ah, speak!—
Thou see'st already, from an angry father,
That I become a weeping supplicant:
Thou canst not die, without condemning us
To share thy tomb.—He, whosoe'er he be,
Whom thou dost love, I will that he be thine.
The monarch's foolish pride can never tear
The true love of a father from my breast.
Thy love, thy hand, my realm, may well convert
The lowest individual to a rank
Lofty and noble: and I feel assured
That he whom thou couldst love, could never be
Wholly unworthy, though of humble birth.
I do conjure thee, speak: whate'er the cost,
I wish thee saved.

My. Me saved? . . . What dreamest thou? . . .
These very words accelerate my death . . .
Let me, for pity's sake, ah, let me quickly
For ever . . . drag myself . . . from thee . . .
Cin. O daughter,
Sole, and belovèd; O, what say'st thou? Ah!
Come to thy father's arms.—O Heav'ns! like one
Distract, and frantic, thou repellest me?
Thou then dost hate thy father? and dost thou
Burn with so vile a passion that thou fearest. . .
My. Ah no, it is not vile; . . . my flame is guilty;
Nor ever . . .
Cin. What is this thou sayest? Guilty,
Provided that thy sire condemn it not,
It cannot be: reveal it.
My. Thou wouldst see
Even that sire himself with horror shudder,
If it should reach the ears of . . . Cinyras . . .
Cin. What do I hear!
My. What have I said? . . . alas! . . .
I know not what I say . . . I do not love. . .
Ah, think it not; O no! . . . Ah, suffer me,
I for the last time fervently conjure thee,
To hasten from thy presence.
Cin. Thankless one:
Now, by exasperating thus my rage
With thy fantastic moods, by trifling thus
With my excessive grief, eternally
Now hast thou forfeited thy father's love.
My. O cruel, bitter, and ferocious menace! . . .
Now, in the anguish of my dying gasp,
Swiftly approaching, . . . to my pangs so dire,
So various, and so fierce, will now be added
The cruel execration of my father? . . .
Shall it be mine to die, removed from thee? . . .
O happy is my mother! . . . she, at least,
Press'd in thy arms . . . may breathe . . . her latest sigh . . .
Cin. What wouldst thou say to me? . . . What dreadful light
Breaks from these words! . . . Thou, impious one, perchance? . . .

My. O Heav'ns! what have I said indeed?...Alas!
Unhappy I!...Where am I?...Whither now
Shall I betake myself?... Where shall I die?—
But now thy dagger may befriend me ...[1]
Cin. Daughter!...
What hast thou done? my dagger ...
My. Lo!... to thee ...
I now restore it ... I at least possess'd
A hand as swift and desp'rate as my tongue.
Cin. .... I'm petrified ... with fear ... and agony,
With pity, ... and with rage.
My. O Cinyras!...
Thou ... see'st me ... now ... expiring ... in thy presence ...
I have ... at once ... both known how ... to avenge
Thee, ... and myself ... to punish ... Thou thyself,
By dint of force, from out my heart ... didst wrest ...
The horrid secret ... But, since with my life
Alone ... it left my lips, ... I die ... less guilty ...
Cin. O day! O crime!... O grief!—To whom my tears?...
My. Ah, weep no more; ... I merit not thy tears ...
Shun my contagious presence; ... and conceal ...
From Cecris ... ever ...
Cin. Wretchedest of fathers!...
And doth the gaping earth not burst asunder
To swallow me alive?... I dare not now
Approach the dying and flagitious woman; ...
And yet, I cannot utterly abandon
My immolated daughter ...

SCENE III.

CECRIS, EURYCLEIA, CINYRAS, MYRRHA.

Ce. By the shrieks
Of death brought hither ...
Cin. Do not thou advance ...[2]
O Heav'ns!...

[1] She suddenly seizes the dagger of her father, and stabs herself with it.
[2] He runs to meet Cecris, and, preventing her from advancing, intercepts from her the sight of the dying Myrrha.

Ce. To my dear daughter's side . . . .
My. O voice!
Eu. Ah, spectacle of horror! on the earth
Myrrha lies welt'ring in her blood? . . .
Ce. My daughter? . . .
Cin. Stop . . .
Ce. Murder'd! . . . How? by whom? . . . I will behold her . . .
Cin. Ah, stop . . . and hear with terror . . . With my dagger
She, . . . with her own hand, has transpierced herself . . .
Ce. And dost thou thus desert thy daughter? . . . Ah!
I will myself . . .
Cin. She is no more our daughter.
With a detestable, disgraceful love
She burn'd for . . . Cinyras . . .
Ce. What do I hear?—
O crime! . . .
Cin. Ah, come! I pray thee let us go,
To die with agony and shame elsewhere.
Ce. Impious . . . —O daughter! . . .
Cin. Come thou! . . .
Ce. Hapless one! . . .
Not once more to embrace her? . . .[1]

Scene IV.

MYRRHA, EURYCLEIA.

My. When I ask'd . . .
It . . . of thee, . . . thou, . . . O Eurycleia, . . . then . . .
Shouldest . . . have given . . . to my hands . . . the sword: . . .
I had died . . . guiltless; . . . guilty . . . now . . . I die . . .

[1] She is dragged away by Cinyras.

XIX.

THE SECOND BRUTUS.

THE ARGUMENT.

LIKE Shakspeare's *Julius Caesar*, this tragedy records the death of that illustrious dictator at the hands of Marcus Junius Brutus and the other conspirators, although the subject is here very differently treated. The other characters in the play are Antony, Cicero, Cassius, Cimber (originally called Cato by Alfieri, who had forgotten that that great man had died shortly before at Utica), and the People, once more personified as in the *First Brutus*. All the above personages appear in Shakspeare, with many others. The death of Cæsar occurred on the Ides (15th) of March, 44 B.C.

In the first scene, the whole of the above characters are assembled in council; the Senators, however, taking the place of the People. Cæsar announces his intention of crowning the long succession of Roman victories by proceeding at once against the Parthians. Cimber thinks that before such an expedition is undertaken, the liberties of Rome should be restored; Antony entirely approves Cæsar's proposal; Cassius is in favor of the abolition of the dictatorship, and of Rome herself then determining whether any fresh war should be entered upon; Cicero laments the present discords in Rome, and thinks that, till they are appeased, the Parthians should not be interfered with. Brutus speaks last, advises Cæsar to disregard the counsels of servile Antony, tells him that he knows he is aiming at supreme authority, reminds him of the popular joy when he thrice repelled the "kingly crown" offered

him as if in sport by Antony, and warns him that, if he tries to become tyrant of Rome, they will all refuse to be his subjects. Cæsar dismisses the council, and announces a meeting for the following day in the Curia of Pompey, finally to settle the question.

At the beginning of Act II. Cimber tells Cicero that he has invited Brutus and Cassius to meet them, to determine on the measures to be taken to resist Cæsar's proposal, as they foresee that, if he marches against the Parthians and defeats them, he will return at the head of a victorious army, who will make him absolute master of Rome. Cassius joins them. Cicero proposes to try to convince the people by his eloquence; but Cimber sees the necessity of rousing the provinces, and resorting even to civil war. Cassius thinks that they ought at once to terminate the matter by slaying Cæsar, and announces his readiness to do so himself, leaving it to some one else to put Antony to death. Brutus appears late on the scene, and announces that he has been detained by Antony coming to him and asking him to have an interview with Cæsar, to which he has agreed. He recounts Cæsar's previous kindness to him, in giving him his life after the battle of Pharsalia; states that he sees in him all the characteristics of a man able to preside nobly over the destinies of enfranchised Rome; announces his intention of trying to induce him to take that course, instead of attempting to become a tyrant; and shows the dagger with which he is prepared to kill him if he refuses.

The third Act shows Cæsar and Antony conferring. Antony states that Brutus is coming to see Cæsar, and warns him against him; but Cæsar states his determination to try to make Brutus his friend and to support his interests in Rome, in his temporary absence in Parthia. Brutus joins Cæsar, and a long and animated conference takes place, each endeavoring to induce the other, but in vain, to adopt his views. It ends by Cæsar astounding Brutus with the news that he is his own son by his mother Servilia (sister of Cato), which he learnt by means of a letter received from her on the eve of the battle of Pharsalia, thus accounting for his clemency to him on that occasion. Brutus is torn by his conflicting emotions as a

patriot and a son, but still rejects with scorn Cæsar's overtures to join him in his attempts on the liberties of Rome. He ends by reminding him that the First Brutus, for the sake of securing those liberties, slew his own sons.

The fourth Act sees Brutus rejoining Cassius and Cimber. He gives the particulars of his late interview, and the discovery of his relationship to Cæsar. He then acquaints them that, having kept his designs secret from his own wife Porcia (Cato's daughter), she had inflicted a dreadful wound on herself and kept it from his knowledge for several days, in order to prove to him that she was worthy of his confidence and a true Roman. On hearing of the enterprise he had in hand, she gave her consent to it, whatever the risk to himself. Antony presently enters, desiring to see Brutus alone on behalf of Cæsar, but he refuses to send his friends away. In their presence Antony urges him to submit to his father, but unsuccessfully. The three friends separate, to make the necessary arrangements for the morrow.

Act V. shows the Senators slowly, and in no great numbers, taking their places in the Curia on the following day. Brutus and Cassius watch the gathering and bid each other farewell. It has been arranged that the signal shall be given by Brutus brandishing his dagger. Cæsar comes, attended by his lictors, and followed by a large crowd. Brutus addresses him publicly, urging him to restore Rome's liberties. He announces, to the universal astonishment, that he is Cæsar's son. Cæsar proclaims that he has decided to transfer to his son his whole authority; but Brutus professes that this means that at his entreaties he is really ready to abdicate and restore freedom to the city. Cæsar finding that he cannot prevail upon Brutus to assist him, assumes an air of authority, states his determination to start against the Parthians forthwith, taking Brutus with him and leaving Antony in charge of Rome. On his insisting, Brutus gives the appointed signal, the conspirators rush forward, and Cæsar dies, covered with wounds, at the foot of Pompey's statue. The others depart in order to slay Antony, the People enter, and Brutus is left alone with them and the dead body. By his address to them, in

which he shows that Cæsar intended making himself king, he turns their fury against him to admiration, and, headed by him, they hasten to the Capitol to proclaim the delivery of Rome.

Voltaire's tragedy of *The Death of Caesar* is based, like Alfieri's, on the supposition that Brutus was Cæsar's son, and, like his, contains no female characters. But there was really no foundation for the report which at one time was spread by scandal, that such a relationship existed, and which arose from some words of Suetonius. Brutus, in fact, was only fifteen years younger than Cæsar.

This tragedy (the last of those generally known) was finally completed in 1788, when Alfieri wrote the Author's Farewell with which it concludes, announcing his intention of writing no more. But two of his three posthumous tragedies, viz. *Abel* and *Alcestis*, were in fact written at a later date. Alfieri states that his two *Brutuses* were conceived and born together; that the sole basis of each was the same passion of liberty, and that one contained the birth and the other the death of Rome. To avoid the appearance of repetition, he purposely placed between them the tragedy of *Myrrha*, as being of an entirely different character, and therefore calculated to "serve as a whet to the appetite of those who would otherwise be sick of hearing of nothing but liberty and Rome." Neither Schlegel nor Sismondi criticises these two tragedies. Alfieri says that his Cæsar was not exactly the Cæsar of Rome, but what he ought and might easily have been. He looks on the Brutus as entirely his own creation, founded on truth, and as being "a colossal likelihood." He admits that Cicero was an unnecessary introduction, and points out "the almost total nullity" of the fourth Act. Though thinking highly of the play as a whole, he says that its plot participates in the defects necessarily inherent to conspiracies, where people talk much more than they act.

This is one of the four tragedies out of the twenty-two written by Alfieri, in which the unity of place is violated, the others being *Philip*, *Agis*, and *Abel*.

DEDICATION

TO THE

FUTURE PEOPLE OF ITALY.

I HOPE that I shall be pardoned by you, O generous and free Italians, the insult that I innocently offered to your grandfathers, or great-grandfathers, in presuming to present to them two Brutuses; tragedies in which, instead of women, speakers, and actors, the People was introduced among many most lofty personages.

I also acutely feel how grave the offence was to attribute tongue, hand, and intellect to those who (from having entirely forgotten that they themselves had ever received these three gifts from nature) thought it almost impossible that their successors should ever re-acquire them.

"But if my words are destined to be seeds, which fructify in honor, to those whom I arouse from death," I flatter myself that perhaps justice will be repaid me by you, and not dissevered from some praise. Indeed I am certain, that if, on this account, I had received blame from your ancestors, it would not therefore have been exempted totally from esteem: since all could never hate or despise him whom no individual hated; and who manifestly constrained himself (as far as was in his power) to benefit all, or at least the majority.

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

PARIS, *January* 17, 1789.

THE SECOND BRUTUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CÆSAR.	CIMBER.
ANTONY.	PEOPLE.
CICERO.	*Senators.*
BRUTUS.	*Conspirators.*
CASSIUS.	*Lictors.*

SCENE.—*The Temple of Concord; afterwards the Curia of Pompey, in Rome.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

CÆSAR, ANTONY, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CIMBER, SENATORS, *all seated.*

Cae. Illustrious fathers, I, as Rome's dictator,
To an assembly summon you to-day.
'Tis true, that Cæsar seldom hitherto
Hath thus collected you: the cause of this
Alone hath risen from our common foes,
Who would not suffer me to quit my arms,
Till I had first discomfited their ranks
With indefatigable promptitude,
E'en from the Betis to Egyptian Nile.
At length 'tis granted to me to enjoy
The privilege, which, more than all things else,
I sought for, to avail myself in Rome
Of Roman sense; and having first restored
Rome to herself, to take advice from you

Touching her welfare.—She from civil broils
At length is respited; and now 'tis time
That ev'ry citizen on Tiber's banks
Should reassume his rights, and hence I hope
That envious calumny may cease to rail.
Rome is not, no, (as lying fame reports,)
In any wise impair'd; at her sole name,
Betwixt the Tagus and Euphrates; 'twixt
Egypt's parch'd country and the far remote,
Unknown, sequester'd, hyperborean isle
Of Albion; at her name, all nations tremble:
And since o'er Crassus he has been victorious,
Far more the Parthian fears; the Parthian, who,
At his unlook'd-for victory, now stands
In blank astonishment; and fearing for it
Chastisement from yourselves. To consummate
Rome's glory, nothing else is wanting now,
Except to show to Parthia and the world,
That there those Roman soldiers, who required
A Roman leader, by the thirst of conquest,
And not of gold, impell'd, were only slain,
And not subdued. To wipe off this disgrace,
And to conduct to Rome the Parthian king
A captive, or to die in the attempt,
I now address myself. To treat maturely
Of such a war, I have assembled you,
Here, in this temple of auspicious name:
May we infer from it a joyful omen:
Ah, yes; for perfect concord 'mongst us all
Will be the only and authentic pledge
Of our success. I therefore do exhort
And counsel you to this.—Our country's honor
Summons us thither with imperious voice,
Where her unconquer'd eagles have received
Intolerable insult: honor now
Imposes silence on all other passions.
The multitude collected in the forum
Burns for revenge; from hence may each of us
Their imprecations hear; from us they seek
(On this do they insist) a full revenge
On the presumptuous Parthians. Hence should we,

Waiving all other subjects, first resolve
How best this punishment may be inflicted.
I first then challenge, from the flow'r of Rome,
(And with a Roman joy I see that challenge
Accepted almost ere it is put forth,)
That loud, unanimous consent, whose echo
Will speedily disperse or slay each foe.
Cim. With so much wonder is my heart o'erwhelm'd,
Hearing of this unanimous consent,
That I first answer here; though I infringe
Rigid prescription, younger than so many.
To us to-day, then, who have been already
Mute by compulsion for so many years,
To us is liberty of speech to-day
Restored? I first, then, will attempt to speak:
I, who beheld great Cato in my arms
In Utica expire. Ah, were my thoughts
Equal to his! If not in loftiness,
They may be similar in brevity.—
Other abuses, other enemies,
And other wrongs, far less endurable,
Ere Rome bestows a thought upon the Parthians,
She ought to punish first. The massacres
Of Rome, e'en from the Gracchi to this time,
Would furnish matter for a copious tale.
Her forum, temples, dwellings not less sacred,
Swimming in blood have been beheld by Rome:
With blood is Italy, with blood her seas
Are all defiled. What portion is there now
Of Rome's vast empire with the waste of blood
Not reeking? Is it by the Parthians spill'd?—
The formerly good citizens are changed
To cruel soldiers; to atrocious swords,
The necessary ploughs; the sacred laws,
To chains and implements of punishment;
The captains, to ferocious despots: thus
What more remains to suffer? what to fear?—
I then assert, that to their pristine state,
Ere aught is done, should all things be restored;
And Rome should be regen'rate, ere avenged.
This to the Romans is an easy task.

An. I, consul, speak; to me it now belongs:
Let him not speak, nor, if he speak, be heard,
Who to the idle winds doth bellow forth
His pompous imbecilities.—O fathers,
In that which our invincible dictator
Proposes to us now, 'tis my opinion
(Although for private ends he may propose it)
It is not so much question to restore
Rome to her pristine glory, as to urge
To that on which the safety, pow'r of Rome,
In short her very being doth depend.
Did e'er a Roman leader unavenged
In battle fall? Did e'er our ancestors
Endure the stigma of an adverse battle,
Without retaliation? Hostile heads
Cut off by Roman swords by thousands, soon
Atoned for ev'ry Roman warrior's life.
Shall Rome, now that the confines of the world
The confines are of Rome, submit to that,
Which she would ne'er endure when limited
Within the boundaries of Italy?
And grant that she were to her glory deaf;
Grant that we suffer'd with impunity
The Parthian tribes their triumph to enjoy;
From such a melancholy precedent,
What lasting injury would not accrue
To Rome? A numerous and warlike people
Dwell 'twixt the Parthian frontiers and our own;
Who, who would bridle them, if peradventure
The terror of the Roman arms should cease?
Germany, Greece, Illyria, Macedon,
Gaul, Britain, Africa, and Spain, and Egypt,
These martial tribes, which, outraged and o'ercome,
On ev'ry side surround us; would they serve
Unwarlike Rome? No, not a day, an hour.
Imperiously, besides your honor, then,
An incontestable necessity
Impels to Asia, to make war against it,
Our haughty eagles.—For the enterprise
It only now remains to choose the leader.—
But, who would venture to propose himself

In Cæsar's presence?—Let us choose another,
On the condition, that in conquests, he,
In finish'd wars, in victories, in triumphs,
Surpasses Cæsar; or that he alone
In battle equals him.—Of what avail
Is creeping envy? Cæsar, now, and Rome,
Are but one object by two names express'd;
Since Cæsar doth alone for Rome assert,
For Rome maintain, the empire of the world.
Then he is now his country's open foe,
And a vile traitor, who would dare advance,
Envious, his private ends, minute and abject,
Before the common weal and common safety.

Cas. I am that villain then, yes, I am he,
Whom he, that is a traitor, calls a traitor.
I am the first to be so; 'tis my boast;
Since Cæsar now and Rome are but one object,
Call'd by two names.—Who to the purpose speaks,
Speaks briefly. Others here perchance may utter,
In servile, artful, and unmeaning accents,
The name of country: if there now remains
For us a country, to the senators
It doth belong to watch her destinies;
This in their name do I asseverate;
But to true senators; and not, like these,
Convened capriciously; for a vain form
Summon'd to ridicule; and not, like these,
Intimidated and encircled round
By bullies and bribed satellites; and not
Beheld and almost heard by citizens
Bought and corrupted by their demagogues,
Who feed them with vain words. *Is this a people?*
This, which no other liberty esteems,
Or knows, except to be an obstacle
To all that's great and good, to be a shield
To all abuse? We now are told to look
Amid the gladiatorial spectacles,
And in the tribute of corn-bearing Egypt,
For Rome's lost majesty. From such a race
First may we see the senate purged, and then
May each of us be heard.—My own opinion

Meanwhile I think it fitting to premise,
And 'tis: That there should no dictator be,
Since we are not at war; that there should be
Just consuls chosen; a just senate form'd;
And that the forum should again behold
Just people, and authentic tribunes. Then
Rome may deliberate about the Parthians;
Then, when by symptoms manifest, once more
Rome by true Romans may be recognized.
While of her former state we see a shadow,
Her few true citizens will in her cause
Their final efforts make, to counteract
The final efforts of her many foes.

Cic. A son, and not ungrateful son, of Rome,
More than myself I love her: and that day,
When from the impious hand of Catiline
I rescued her, Rome hail'd me as her father.
Rememb'ring this, the sweet tears yet I feel
Of gratitude and tenderness suffuse
My swimming eyes. The public happiness,
True peace, and liberty, have ever been,
And are, my wish. Could I for Rome alone,
Such as I've always lived for her, expire!
O what will be my gain, if for her sake
Consumed, this remnant of a painful life
I to her peace devote!—I speak sincerely;
My hoary hairs may well obtain belief.
My language doth not tend to irritate
Him on the one hand, whom a righteous anger
Already has enough in soul embitter'd,
For many and long-suffer'd injuries;
Nor, on the other hand, to raise still higher
The now excessive arrogance of him
Who deems himself without competitor.
I speak to reconcile the good of Rome
(If it be possible) with that of all.—
We have already for a long time seen
The ill effects among us of the sword,
Unhappily laid bare. The names alone
Of the ringleaders who infringed the laws
Were changed, and ever to the injury

Of the oppress'd republic. Who among us
Sincerely loves his country; who in heart,
Not in words only, is a citizen;
Now my example let him imitate.
Amid the rancor, hidden and profound,
The manifest atrocious enmities;
Amid the brandish'd swords, (if once again
The raging Furies venture to unsheathe them,)
Let each of us expose his breast unarm'd:
Thus will these frantic and discordant spirits
Be laid at rest; or we alone shall fall,
Slain by their cruel swords; to their disgrace,
Sole, genuine Romans, we.—These are the thoughts,
The aspirations, and the tears are these
Of one, a Roman citizen: do ye
All listen to him equally: and who
With too much glory is already laden,
Let him not tarnish it, or lose it quite,
By trying to no purpose to gain more:
And who with envy sees another's glory,
Let him remember that not envious thoughts,
But lofty emulation in the contest
Of real virtue, can alone augment
His own pretensions, and, without a stain,
And laudably, diminish those of others.—
But, since in Rome there doth so much remain
To occupy our thoughts, we should, methinks,
Forget the Parthians now. Ah, may Rome be
Harmonious by our means, and recomposed!
And may the Parthians, at one glance of hers,
And ev'ry foreign foe that she possesses,
All disappear, like clouds before the wind.

Bru. Cimber, and Cassius, and great Cicero,
Their lofty Roman sentiments, so like
True Romans have announced, that nought remains
For him succeeding them to say of Rome.
Nought now remains, except to speak of him
Who in himself has centred Rome, and now
E'en deigns not to dissemble it.—To thee,
Cæsar, since Rome in thee alone exists,
I of thyself will speak, and not of Rome.

I love thee not, and this thou knowest; thou,
Who lov'st not Rome; sole cause why thee I love not:
I do not envy thee, because no more
I deem myself to thee inferior now,
Since thou'rt become inferior to thyself:
I do not fear thee, Cæsar; since I'm always
Rather prepared to die than be a slave:
And, finally, I hate thee not, because
In nothing do I fear thee. Now then, hear
Brutus alone; yield faith to Brutus only;
Not to thy servile consul, who doth stand
Removed so far away from all thy virtues,
While he with thee thy vices only shares,
And seconds, and augments them.—Thou, O Cæsar,
P'rhaps yet deservest to be saved; (I think so;)
And I would have it so; since thou so much,
Wouldst thou repent, might'st benefit thy country:
Yes, thou mayst do it, as thou hast been able
To injure her so grievously already.
This thy own people, (Cassius hath erewhile
Pourtray'd it to the life,) this thy own people,
A few days since, did somewhat disenchant
Thy visions of supreme authority.
Thou heard'st the people's cries of indignation,
That day when, as in sport, the majesty
Of the new consul daintily attempted
To twine around thy brow the royal wreath.
Thou heard'st all shudder; and thy regal wrath
Made thee turn pale. However, by thy hand
The vile wreath was repell'd, which, in thy heart,
Thou didst so ardently desire: and hence
Thou wert assail'd with universal plaudits;
But these same acclamations of thy people,
Which, though in truth no longer Roman, were not
As foolish as thou fain wouldst have them be,
Inflicted mortal stabs upon thy breast.
That Rome might have a short-lived tyranny,
Thou that day learnedst, but a king, no, never!
Thou know'st, too clearly for thy inward peace,
That thou art not a citizen: and yet,
I also see it, that it weighs upon thee

To be a tyrant; and for this, perchance,
Thou wert not born: thou see'st now if I hate thee.
Reveal thou quickly, then, if thou dost know it,
To us and to thyself, that which thou think'st,
That which thou hop'st to be.—And learn thou now,
If thou dost know it not, O thou dictator,
Learn from a citizen, from Brutus learn,
That which thou meritest to be. O Cæsar,
A ministration that's more glorious far
Than that which thou assumest, doth await thee.
Tyrant of Rome thou covetest to be;
Presume, and thou shalt certainly succeed,
To constitute thyself her liberator.—
Thou, by the freedom with which Brutus speaks,
Mayst clearly apprehend, that if of us
Thou deem'st thyself lord paramount, as yet
I do not deem myself to be thy subject.

An. Of thy rash insolence ere long I swear
The punishment . . .

Cae. Let this suffice.—So long,
In hearing you with silence, have I given
Of my forbearance no light evidence:
And, should I hold myself of all things here
The master, 'twould not misbecome me now;
Since I with patience have not only dared
To hear, but have provoked, the daring speech
Of reprehensive tongues. Yet to yourselves
This consultation seems not free enough;
Although ye the dictator have assail'd
With insults, which he might refuse to hear.
I in the court of Pompey, then, invite you,
Far from the forum, by to-morrow's dawn,
To a more free debate, and with no arm'd
Attendants to defend you from the people.
There, more at length, words more insulting yet,
And more reproachful, shall I hear from you:
But there, too, must the Parthians' destiny
Be finally resolved. If it seem meet
To the majority, that Cæsar's fate
Be also there determined, I dissent not,
Provided that majority decree it.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

CICERO, CIMBER.

Cic. There does not now remain a safe asylum
Save this, where to discuss the fate of Rome . . .
Cim. Ah! little now is left for us to say;
Action alone remains for us. I have
Invited hither to us in thy name
Brutus and Cassius; soon will they be here.
The exigence admits of no delay;
Our country by to-morrow's rising sun
(Too certainly, alas!) will undergo
The last extreme of danger.
Cic. It is true
That the secure audacity of Cæsar,
No more allowing to his vile designs
Any delay, doth render on our part
Further delay impossible. At length
For nought he wishes, but his troops in arms;
Since from experience he is now convinced
That universal terror will do more
To further his attempts, than the bribed love
Of the unstable people. In his heart
He laughs at our misfortunes; and he lets us
At leisure rail: provided he obtain
His army: and of this he is secure,
From the majority of votes which he
Has purchased in the senate. Afterwards
On his return he'll be avenged on us
For our last efforts in the cause of freedom.
He leads the Roman warriors 'gainst the Parthians,
To give to Rome the last shock, as the first
He gave her, when returning from the Rhine.
He hath advanced too far now to retract:
Now, even I confess that we, too, cannot
Longer delay with safety. But, alas!
As a good citizen should do, I tremble:

I shudder, to reflect that our resolve
Rome's fate perchance will seal.
Cim. Behold to meet us
Cassius repairs.

SCENE II.

CASSIUS, CICERO, CIMBER.

Cas. Have I come late? However,
Brutus is not yet here.
Cim. He'll come ere long.
Cas. Here many of our friends would follow me:
But in these melancholy walls, are spies
So much more numerous than citizens,
That, all suspicion wholly to prevent,
I rather chose to come here unattended.
To the unbending rectitude of Cimber,
To Cicero's perspicuous intellect,
Lastly to my implacable revenge,
'Twere now sufficient could we only add
The energy sublime of Brutus' wrath.
Could any other council be convened
Of nobler constitution, and in nature
Better adapted to exert itself
For Rome's prosperity?
Cic. Ah! may the gods
Who watch o'er Rome grant that it thus may prove!
I, far as in me lies, do hold myself
Ready to serve in ev'ry way my country:
I grieve that there alone remains to me
But a weak remnant of declining years
To sacrifice for her. My wasted strength
Can with my hand but little serve her cause;
But, if this tongue hath ever in the forum
Or in the senate, the high sentiments
Of freedom utter'd; more than ever yet,
On this day Rome shall hear me thunder forth
Intrepidly the same free accents: Rome,
Whom I will not survive one day, I swear it,
If she is doom'd to fall amid her chains.
Cas. Thou always wert the orator sincere

Of liberty; thy words sublime have Rome
Oft from her abject lethargy awaken'd:
But who remains now that deserves to hear thee?
All now are apprehensive, or are bribed;
Nor, if they heard them, could they comprehend
Thy elevated sentiments ...
Cic. Our people,
Though no more Roman, is a people still:
And though each man be in himself debased
As far as man can be, the greater part,
Soon as the multitude collects, is changed:
I further would assert, that we may give them,
When in the forum they're assembled all,
A spirit altogether different
From that which each 'mid his own Lares feels.
Truth, falsehood, anger, pity, reason, grief,
Justice, and honor, glory even yet,
Are impulses, which, by the man who has them
All truly in his heart, as on his lips,
May be, yes all of them, at will transfused
(Whate'er their individual character)
Into the hearts of congregated thousands.
I hope to-day to mount, and not in vain,
The rostrum, if indignant eloquence,
Fervid and free, may aught avail; and there,
If it be needful, I'm resolved to die.—
Say, on what base was that prodigious power
Of Cæsar founded, which we all now fear?
The' opinion of the many. With the sword,
'Tis true, he conquer'd Gaul; but with his tongue,
With plausible insinuating words,
First o'er his legions the ascendency
He gain'd, and o'er the people then in part:
He could not purchase, or destroy them all,
He only: but he easily could make
All those whom he had first inveigled, slaves.
And cannot we then equally with him
By means of language undeceive, make whole,
Illuminate both heart and intellect?
In such a contest, 'twixt my eloquence,
And that of the tyrannical dictator,

The truth would be on my side, force on his:
And in the noble drift of my discourse
Do I so much confide, that if but once
I gain a hearing, I his weapons scorn.
To hearts and ears, that have been Roman once,
Such fervid language I may yet address,
That for a while at least they may become
Romans once more. The character of Cæsar
Fully disclosed, and Cæsar is o'ercome.

Cim. There is no doubt: if Rome would only hear thee,
Thy manly speech might rouse her to new life:
But, if thou also generously chose
To mount alone, and die upon the rostrum,
Which now to him is death, who dares to breathe
The name of freedom thence; if also thou
Dared to do this alone; by the debased
And purchased howlings of vile parasites
All means of being heard would be cut off.
Those wretches now exclusively possess
The bar of eloquence, and banish thence
All upright orators. On Tiber's banks
Rome stands no longer: it behoves us now
In the remotest provinces to seek
For arms, for virtues, and for citizens.
A dire necessity, and this alone,
Could justify us in recurring now
To open war; but yet this is not peace.
We are compell'd once more with blood to purge
Those rankling humors, which, oppressing Rome,
Keep her exanimate 'twixt life and death.
Cato a Roman was, most certainly;
And he detested uselessly to shed
The blood of citizens; yet that most just
Among just men, proclaim'd that "nursed in arms,
"And now by arms exhausted, arms alone
"Can Rome regenerate." What else remains
For us to do? Or Rome is overcome,
And with her fall all her true citizens;
Or she's victorious, and the guilty ones
Are scatter'd and destroy'd, or else are changed.

Is victory fast chain'd to Cæsar's car?
Let him be only once discomfited;
And e'en his very partisans, convinced
That he is not invincible, will then
With other eyes behold him; with one voice
All will then dare to execrate his name,
And, as an impious tyrant, to proscribe him.
Cas. Why first by us should he not be proscribed?
When we ourselves can pass the sentence, when
We can the first that sentence execute,
From a vile populace should we expect it?
While at our will, e'en in the midst of Rome,
Within her dwellings, in the very senate,
We may thus cope with Cæsar, and obtain
O'er him a perfect triumph; in the camp,
Ought he, and at the cost of many lives
Less impious than his own, to be provoked
By us to dang'rous and uncertain fight,
And be, perchance, the victor? Where a sword,
This sword of mine alone, and this my fierce,
Inexorable wrath that makes me wield it,
Suffice, more than suffice, to terminate
That despicable life, which holds all Rome
In tears, unworthily enslaved and chain'd;
Where nought is wanting to destroy the tyrant,
Whoe'er he be, except a single sword,
And one, a Roman, who may brandish it;
Why, why should we unsheathe so many?—Ah!
Let others sit in council, weigh, discuss,
Delay, and waver till they miss the time:
I, among all schemes, deem the briefest best:
And now especially, since the most brief
Will be the boldest, noblest, and most sure.
Worthy it is of Rome to slay this one
Openly; by the hand of Cassius, too,
Cæsar deserves to die. To the just fury
Of other men I leave the punishment
Of the base servant-consul Antony.—
Lo, Brutus comes: ah, let us, let us hear,
If he dissents from me.

Scene III.

BRUTUS, CICERO, CASSIUS, CIMBER.

Cic. Does Brutus come
So late to such a lofty conference? . . .
Bru. Ah! I had been the first here, if erewhile
I had not been prevented . . .
Cim. And by whom?
Bru. Not one of you could guess. 'Twas Antony
Who would at length address me.
Cic. Antony?
Cas. And the vile satellite of Cæsar gain'd
Audience from Brutus?
Bru. Yes, indeed he gain'd it,
And in his Cæsar's name. He would confer
With me, at all events: and he invites me,
If I consent to it, to come to him;
Or he to me . . .
Cim. His offer was rejected? . . .
Bru. No. Cæsar as a friend, in my pure heart
Wakes no more fear, than Cæsar as a foe.
Hence I will hear him, and ere long, and in
This very temple.
Cas. What can be his wish?
Bru. Perchance, to bribe me. But ye still, I hope,
Confide in Brutus.
Cas. More than in ourselves.
Cim. In Brutus all confide; e'en the most vile.
Bru. And to excite me, in respect of deeds,
(As if I slept) I met with on my road
Exciting exhortations scatter'd round me;
Strong, brief, and Roman; and at once expressive
Of praise and blame tow'rds me, as if I were
Slow to do that which Rome expected of me.
This I am not; and ev'ry stimulus
Applied to me is idle.
Cas. But, I pray thee,
What hop'st thou from this interview with Cæsar? . . .
Cic. Thou hop'st, perchance, to change him . . .
Bru. I am pleased

That the strong sense of noble Cicero
My scheme in part conjectures.
Cas. O! what say'st thou?
We all, long time expecting thee, have here
At length express'd our sentiments: we all,
In hating Cæsar, and in loving Rome,
In being willing for her sake to die,
Were as one man: but threefold were our views
As to the mode. To stir up civil war;
To rouse the people from deceit to arms;
Or with the private sword to immolate
Cæsar in Rome; now, which of these would be
The choice of Brutus?
Bru. Mine?—Not one of these,
At present. If mine afterwards proved vain,
I would undoubtedly adopt the last.
Cas. And thine? What other course remains to us?
Bru. To you I'm known: I am not wont to speak
In vain: be pleased to hear me.—Rome is now
Far too infirm, to be in one day cured.
The people might be roused, but briefly roused,
To virtue; never with the bait of gold
Are they, as they are drawn to baseness, drawn
To rectitude. Can genuine excellence
Be ever purchased? The corrupted people
Would form a treach'rous basis for fresh freedom.
Perchance the senators are less infected?
One may enumerate the upright ones;
The guilty also in their hearts hate Cæsar,
Not in that he robs all of liberty,
But in that he, a single tyrant, stops them
From being tyrants in their turn. To him
They would succeed; and therefore they abhor him.
Cic. Ah, were this not, as 'tis indeed, too true!
Bru. Amid such vices the good citizen
Should steer with care, lest he to bad add worse.
A tyrant Cæsar is; but was not always.
The impious wish to be lord paramount
Hath only lately risen in his heart:
And the vile Antony, by stratagems,
Adds fuel to his flame, to drag him on

To his perdition, that he thus may rise
Upon his ruin'd fortunes. Friends like these
Fall to the lot of tyrants.
Cas. In his breast,
Connatural with his being, evermore
Cæsar possess'd the thirst to be supreme . . .
Bru. No; not to reign supreme: he never dared
To wish for so much. Now thou deemest him
More bold, more lofty, than he ever was.
Ambition, a necessity for fame,
An ardent spirit, an unworthy wish
To be avenged on private enemies,
And lucky opportunity, at last,
More than aught else, have to that height impell'd him,
At which, when now arrived, he feels himself
Astonish'd at his own temerity.
A thirst for honor more than thirst for power
Still, in his heart, maintains ascendency.
Should I prove this to you? Does he not now
Pant to attack the Parthians, and to quit
Rome, where he still possesses many foes?
Cim. He hopes to purchase with the Parthian laurels
The royal crown.
Bru. Then he would rather be
To valor than to force indebted for it:
He thence is more ambitious than corrupt . . .
Cas. Dost thou to us pronounce his eulogy? . . .
Bru. Hear the conclusion.—Cæsar wavers still
Within himself; he wishes yet for fame;
He is not therefore yet, in heart at least,
Consummately a tyrant: but, he now
Begins to tremble, and a short time since
He knew not fear; he then approaches near
The brink of tyranny. A few days since,
Terror assail'd him, when he saw the crown
By his bribed people from his grasp withheld.
But Cæsar, be he what he may, as yet
Is not contemptible, is not unworthy
That others should facilitate for him
The path of reformation. For myself,
I must despise myself, or him esteem;

Since I consented for the gift of life
To be indebted to him, on the day
When, in Pharsalia's fields, a vanquish'd foe,
Within his pow'r I fell. I live; and this
My life is a sufficient blot to Brutus;
But, without baseness or ingratitude,
I will devise the means that blot to cancel.

Cic. Such often is the fate of war: thou thus
Hadst also used thy triumph over him,
If thou hadst conquer'd. Did not he himself
Once as a gift receive that life, to Rome
Now so disastrous? Yes, did not he also
Receive it as a gift from Sylla's hands,
By grace express, and error more express?

Bru. 'Tis true; but never does my mind forego
The recollection of a benefit:
Yet at the same time do my country's claims,
And my own duties, in my heart sink deep.
In short, to Brutus, Cæsar such appears,
That, (as he is, as now from day to day
He more becomes,) a tyrannous dictator,
Brutus, on no condition, will permit
His life to be prolong'd; or he will kill him,
Or he himself will fall in the attempt . . .
But such to Brutus Cæsar also seems,
That he alone to Rome can now restore,
If he once more become a citizen,
Liberty, empire, energy, and life.
He is e'en now the idol of the people;
Let him become a model to the good;
Let him, against the guilty, arm the laws
With added terrors: till the whole returns
Unto its pristine state, let all his power
Be turn'd away from ruining the laws
To keeping them intact. He was endow'd
With lofty thoughts; he was a citizen:
For fame still burns he: he is blinded, yes;
But such from prosp'rous fate, and impious friends,
Who have alone made him forsake the path
Of genuine glory, such from these alone
Has he become.—Or nothing is my speech,

Or I shall know how from my breast to draw
Such burning and impressive words, to use
To him such true, such strong, tremendous reasons,
And in such numbers use them, that I hope,
Yes I indulge the hope, to force e'en Cæsar;
To make him great indeed, so pure in virtue,
That he o'er ev'ry man, o'er ev'ry Roman,
Will rise unparallel'd in excellence;
Yet be a simple citizen of Rome.
If but his glory profit Rome, I place it
Before my own: methinks that my design
Gives a convincing evidence of this.—
But, if in vain speaks Brutus now to Cæsar,
Thou see'st it, Cassius, thus I ever wear it;
Behold the dagger, which will be more swift
To slay him, than thy sword...
Cic. O genuine patriot!
Thou art too great; ill canst thou comprehend
The tyrant Cæsar, judging from thyself.
Cas. Brutus sublime, a thing impossible,
But worthy of thee, thou projectest; one
Thou only couldst adventure. I oppose not
Myself to thee: ah! Cæsar fully can,
And he alone, divest thee of thy error.
Cim. To change a tyrant to a citizen?
'Tis in itself proof, this thy gen'rous hope,
O Brutus, that thou ne'er couldst be a tyrant.
Bru. That will be soon made clear: myself hereafter
Will give you full account of all my deeds.—
If I a vain, abortive orator
Should prove, so much the more thou'lt find me, Cassius,
I swear to thee, obedient to thy orders,
A lusty and a fierce tyrannicide.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CÆSAR, ANTONY.

An. Yes, Cæsar; soon will Brutus come to thee
Within this very temple, where erewhile
Thou didst consent to hear and tolerate
His arrogant harangues. Ere long shalt thou
Hear him, since thus thou wilt, as man to man.
Cae. I hold myself for this to thee indebted:
'Twas not an easy matter to persuade
Brutus to come, and thus confer with me;
Nor had I dared to trust to any one,
Except to Antony, this embassy.
An. How much it grieves me, that to my entreaties
Inexorably deaf, thou dost persist
In tolerating Brutus! 'Tis the first
Of all thy wishes, with which Antony
Reluctantly complied. Yet in the guise
Of amity, and in thy name, I stoop'd
To supplicate him whom I know to be,
By certain proof, thy mortal enemy,
And whom, as such, I utterly abhor.
Cae. Many hate Cæsar; yet, one man alone
I deem a foe that's worthy of myself:
And he is Brutus.
An. Thence, not Brutus only,
But Brutus first, and Cassius, and then Cimber,
And Tullius, and so many more, should die.
Cae. The more embitter'd, lofty, strong my foe,
So much more pleasure do I always take
In overcoming him; and oftentimes
More, than with arms, with pardon have I done it.
To have recourse to reconciling words,
When I have pow'r to arbitrate by force;
To captivate, persuade, convince a heart
That swells with hate; to make that man my friend,
Whose very being I could crush to nought;
Ah, this against a worthy enemy,

This is indeed the most illustrious vengeance;
And it is mine.
An. Let Cæsar learn to be
Great from himself alone: for this has nature
Intended him: but how at once to make
Rome and himself secure, let him be taught
To-day by him who loves them both alike:
And above ev'ry man, that man am I.
I ne'er shall cease reminding thee, that if
Thou slay'st not Brutus, thou in this art check'd
More by thy vain and individual glory,
Than by thy real fondness for thy country;
And that thou manifestest little heed
For the security of both.
Cae. Wouldst thou
Cæsar intimidate with base suspicion?
An. If Cæsar will not for himself, for Rome
He might, and ought to tremble.
Cae. Cæsar ought
To die for glory, and for Rome; but never
For her to tremble, never for himself.
I in the camp the foes of Rome have conquer'd;
These were the only enemies of Cæsar.
'Mong those, who 'gainst her had the sword unsheathed,
Was Brutus; I already, arms in hand,
Had, as a foe, o'ercome him, and e'en then
With the just sword of war I slew him not;
Now in the walls of Rome, unarm'd, (O Heav'ns!)
Shall I now cause him to be put to death
With the deceitful and disgraceful dagger,
Or with the unjust axe? There is no cause,
That ever could to such an outrage goad me:
And even if I wish'd it, . . . ah! perchance . . .
I could not . . . do it.—But yet, finally,
To my so many triumphs, that o'er Brutus,
That also o'er the Parthians, still are wanting:
The one shall be the ladder to the other.
I will make Brutus, at all risks, my friend.
At present, more than ev'ry other object,
The meditated vengeance for the death
Of murder'd Crassus, weighs upon my thoughts;

And in the enterprise, in which at once
The fame of Rome and Cæsar are involved,
Brutus may much assist me.
An. Thy renown
Canst thou increase?
Cae. While there remains aught more
For me to do, I deem what I have done
A nothing: such my nature is. 'Gainst Parthia
An impulse irresistible impels me.
Shall Rome, while I still live, be ever conquer'd?
A thousand times let Cæsar perish first.—
But, while I fight in Asia, I ought not
To leave the city full of factious spirits,
And humors rankling and unreconciled:
Nor would I leave her full of blood and terror;
Though this may be the most effectual means
To render her submissive.—Brutus only
Can level all for me . . .
An. Then Antony
Thou deem'st a thing of nought?
Cae. —Part of myself
Art thou in all my warlike undertakings:
Hence at my side I still wish thee to be
The terror of the Parthians. I propose
In other ways to make good use of Brutus.
An. I am prepared by ev'ry means to serve thee;
And this thou knowest. But thou art too blind,
In what relates to Brutus.
Cae. He is blinder
In what relates to me, perchance. But this
Will be, I hope, the day to undeceive him:
I'm forced to-day at least to make the trial . . .
An. Behold him here.
Cae. Now leave me with him; soon
Hence will I come to thee.
An. Ah! mayest thou
Completely extricate thyself from error;
And him in time, too, thoroughly detect!

SCENE II.

BRUTUS, CÆSAR.

Bru. O Cæsar, we are ancient foes: but thou
Art hitherto the conqueror, and yet
Thou seem'st the happier one. But I am still
Than thou less wretched, though I seem the conquer'd.
But whatsoe'er our state, o'erwhelm'd, oppress'd,
Conquer'd, infirm, and moribund is Rome.
An equal impulse, though from diff'rent motives,
Has hither brought us to confer together.
Thou hast important things to say to me,
If Antony speak truth; and also I
Come to impart to thee important things,
If thou dare listen to them.

Cae. Although Brutus
Hath ever been my foe, I ne'er was such,
Nor am I now to him; nor, if I would,
Could I be ever so. I to thy dwelling
Would have myself repair'd to speak with thee;
But I shrunk back lest by thee it might be
Deem'd an indignity, if Cæsar dared
To go where, as the wife of Brutus, dwells
The sister of great Cato: hence I sent
Earnest entreaties to thyself to come
Hither from thence.—Me only seeest thou,
Devoid of pomp, by lictors not preceded;
In all things like to Brutus; if indeed
He scorns me not as such. Here thou wilt hear
Nor Rome's dictator, nor the conqueror
Of the illustrious Pompey . . .

Bru. The sole train
Not unbecoming Cæsar, is his valor:
And more especially when he presents
Himself to Brutus.—Happy thou, if thou
Couldst also leave behind thee, as thou canst
Thy lictors, and their fasces, the remorse,
And the perpetual and unceasing terror,
Of permanent dictatorship!

Cae. What! Terror?
This is a word not even to my ears,
Much less, then, to my heart, yet known.

Bru. It was
Unknown to mighty Cæsar in the camp,
Invincible as leader; it is not
To Cæsar in the walls of Rome, by force
Now her dictator. To deny this to me,
Cæsar is too magnanimous: to Brutus
He may confess it without shame. To dare
As much as this to tell me, in itself
Will constitute no small part of thy greatness.
Let us speak frankly: it becomes us both.—
One individual never can impress
A multitude with fear, till he himself
Has previously felt it. This to prove,
Hear what is now thy state of mind towards me.
Thou without opposition mayst kill Brutus:
Thou knowest that I love thee not; nay more,
Thou know'st that I may be an obstacle
To thy iniquitous ambition: yet,
Why dost thou not do this? Because thou fearest,
That if thou kill me now, it might increase
Thy own perplexities. Thou wouldst meanwhile
Hear me, and speak with me, because alarm
Is now thy only law; nor this perchance
Thou know'st thyself; or shunnest the conviction.

Cae. Ungrateful! . . . In Pharsalia's field was not
Thy life within my pow'r?

Bru. But thou, inflamed
With glory, and yet glowing from the battle,
Wert noble then: and thou wert born to be so:
But here, from day to day thou more and more
Sinkest beneath thyself.—Repent thou; know
That thou wert never born to be a cold,
Pacific tyrant: I affirm it to thee . . .

Cae. Thy praise, though mix'd with insults, pleases me.
I love thee; I esteem thee: and I would
Be Brutus only, if I were not Cæsar.

Bru. Thou mayst be both; to Brutus mayst thou add,
And nothing take from Cæsar: here I come
Myself, to urge thee to it. It depends
On thyself only to be great indeed:
Yes, thou mayst be so, even far beyond
Each ancient mighty Roman: and the means

Are very simple; dare, then, to adopt them:
I first to this conjure thee; and I feel,
As I address thee, with true Roman tears
Mine eyes suffused . . .—But, ah! thou speakest not?
Well know'st thou what my lofty means would be:
Thou feel'st it in thy heart, the cry of truth,
Which there is sounding in imperious tones.
Be bold, be bold; shake off thy abject chains,
Which make thee nothing e'en in thine own eyes;
Which keep thee, more than others thou couldst keep,
Enslaved and bound. Do thou to-day from Brutus
Learn to be Cæsar. If of thy renown
I were invidious, wouldst thou hear me now
Beseech thee to annihilate my own?
I know the truth; I flatter not myself:
I am in Rome inferior unto thee
In dignity, in years, in pow'r, and triumphs,
As well as fame. If by my single efforts
The name of Brutus could be signalized,
'Twere only possible for this to be
By the entire destruction of thy name.
A timid and a whisp'ring voice I hear,
A voice thence not legitimately Roman,
Proclaiming Brutus Rome's deliverer,
As it calls thee her tyrant. Such to make me,
It needful is, that I defeat, or slay thee.
No light achievement is the first; the second
Is far more easy than thou now supposest:
And, if I of myself alone had thought,
I had already been without a master:
But I, a Roman, think of Rome; and choose
Thee to solicit, when I ought to slay thee,
For her sake only. Yes, ah! Cæsar, thou
Convinced by me, shouldst be compell'd once more
To be her citizen. To Rome thou canst,
Thou first, thou only, more effectually
A thousand times, than Brutus can, thou canst
To Rome restore the whole; peace, liberty,
Salvation, and a renovated lustre:
In short, as much as thou hast taken from her.
Yet, for a little time, thy regal power

Do thou, though as a citizen, exert,
In reinforcing her enfeebled laws,
In taking evermore from all the courage,
And means to imitate thee as a tyrant;
And thou wilt thus at once from all have taken,
As far as they are Romans, the presumption
To emulate thee as a citizen.—
Now, tell me: dost thou think thou'rt less than Sylla?
He, far more guilty than thyself, more cruel,
Imbrued, and gorged with more abundant blood;
He yet presumed to be a citizen,
And was illustrious. O! how much more noble
Would Cæsar be, who has so much surpass'd
Sylla in pow'r! And, O, far greater then
Would be thy fame, if freely thou restore,
What pow'r and artifice to thee have given,
To her, thy country, whose sole right it is;
If thou know'st better how to prize thyself;
If thou, in short, preventest that henceforth
In Rome to all eternity arise
Another Cæsar, or another Sylla.

Cae. Sublime and ardent youth; thy eloquent
And fervid exhortation is, perchance,
But too, too true! Thy sentiments produce
Unspeakable emotions in my heart;
Then when thou less than me dost call thyself,
Thy great superiority I feel,
E'en to my own confusion. But to be
The first myself this to confess to thee,
And not to be offended when I do it,
And not to hate thee for it, ought to be
To thee a certain, and a lofty proof
That in my bosom I conceive for thee
Some unexplain'd affection.—Thou art dear
To me, believe it; thou art very dear.—
That which I have not time to finish now,
I will that, after me, it be by thee
Accomplish'd more effectively. Consent
That to my many trophies I annex
Those of the vanquish'd Parthians; and I die
Contented. Great part of my life have I

Pass'd in the camp; the camp alone would be
To me a worthy tomb. 'Tis true, I've robb'd her,
In part, of freedom, but in more abundance
I have increased for Rome her pow'r and glory:
O Brutus, at my death, thou wilt repair,
Beneath the shadow of my victories,
The wrongs which I have done to her. In me
With safety Rome no longer can repose:
The good which I would do to her, would be,
By what I've done of evil, evermore
Tarnish'd and poison'd. Thence I've chosen thee,
Within my secret thoughts, as the physician
For her internal wounds: thou ever wert
Upright and great; and, better than myself,
The Romans thou canst render truly great,
And unto perfect health once more restore.
I, as a father, speak to thee; . . . and thou,
More than a son, O Brutus, art to me.

Bru. . . . This thy discourse I scarcely comprehend.
On me in no wise justly can devolve
Thy illegitimate, extinguish'd power.
But what? already speakest thou of Rome,
As a paternal heritage? . . .

Cae. Ah! hear me.—
From thee no longer can I hide a matter,
Which, when once known to thee, entirely ought
To change thee in my favor.

Bru. Change thyself,
And I at once am changed; o'ercome thyself;
The only triumph that remains for thee . . .

Cae. With diff'rent eyes, when thou hast heard this secret,
Wilt thou behold me.

Bru. I shall ever be
A Roman. But, explain thyself.

Cae. . . . O Brutus,
In my deportment tow'rds thee, in my looks,
And in my accents, in my very silence,
Say, dost thou not perceive that tow'rds thyself
Boundless affections move me and transport me?

Bru. 'Tis true; I see in thee a strange emotion;
And from the man they rather seem to spring,

Than from the tyrant: feign'd, I cannot think them;
Unfeign'd, to what I know not to impute them.
Cae. . . . But thou, what impulses dost thou experience
Tow'rds me within thy bosom?
Bru. Ah! a thousand:
And for thyself alternately I feel
All impulses, save envy. I know not
How to express them; but in two I class them:
Anger and horror, if thou'rt still a tyrant;
If thou becom'st a man and citizen,
Thou dost inspire me with unbounded love,
Mix'd with astonishment. Which of these two
Wouldst thou from Brutus?
Cae. Love: to me thou ow'st it . . .
A sacred, and indissoluble tie
Binds thee to me.
Bru. To thee? what can this be? . . .
Cae. Thou art my son.
Bru. O Heav'ns! what do I hear? . . .
Cae. Ah! come, son, to my breast . . .
Bru. Can this be so? . . .
Cae. If thou believ'st this not from my assertion,
Thou from thy mother surely wilt believe it.
This is a letter from her; in Pharsalia,
A few hours ere the battle, I received it.
Behold; her hand is known to thee: ah! read it.
Bru.[1] "Cæsar, (O Heav'ns!) thou dost perchance prepare,
" Not only with thy fellow-citizens,
" And Pompey to wage war, but with thy son.
" Brutus the fruit is of our youthful loves.
" I am constrain'd to make this known to thee;
" To this confession nothing could have brought me,
" Except a mother's fears. Thou shudder'st, Cæsar;
" Suspend, if time be yet allow'd, thy sword:
" Thou by thy son mayst be destroy'd; or thou
" Thyself with thy own hand mayst slay thy son.
" I tremble . . . O may Heav'n grant that in time
" A father may have heard my words! . . . I tremble . . .
" Servilia."—Fierce and unexpected blow!
The son of Cæsar, I?

[1] Reads the letter.

Cae. Ah, yes! thou art.
Come to my arms, ah, come!
Bru. O Romè! . . . O father! . . .
O nature! . . . O my duty! . . . —Ere I clasp thee,
See, at thy feet a suppliant Brutus falls;
Nor will he rise, unless he may embrace
In thee the father of himself and Rome.
Cae. Ah, rise, O son!—How canst thou ever thus
With such ferocious coldness freeze thy heart,
That nature's first affections sway thee not?
Bru. And what? dost thou pretend to love thy son?
Thou lov'st thyself; all feelings in thy heart
Are to the love of rule alone subservient.
Prove that thou art a citizen and father;
The last a tyrant never is: ah, prove
That thou art such; and thou wilt find in me
A son. Twice give me life: for I a slave
Can never be; a tyrant never will be.
Or Brutus is the son of a free father,
Himself free also, in free Rome; or Brutus
Will not exist. I'm ready to shed all
My blood for Rome; and for thyself, if thou
A Roman be, a father true of Brutus . . .
O joy! a noble tear do I behold
Start from thine eye? The icy crust is snapp'd
In which thy heart was cased; thou'rt now a father.
Ah! hear thou from my lips the cry of nature;
And Rome and Brutus shall for thee be one.
Cae. . . . My heart thou rendest . . . Fierce necessity! . . .
I cannot now exclusively obey
The feelings of my heart.—Belovèd Brutus,
Hear me.—Too far the servitude of Rome
Is now advanced: with less of equity,
And greater injury to Rome, will others
The reins of empire seize upon, if now
Brutus refuse them from the hands of Cæsar . . .
Bru. O trait'rous words! O infamous expressions
Of a corrupted and degen'rate mind!—
To me thou never wert, nor art, a father.
Ere thou revealedst thy ignoble heart,
And my vile birth to me, had thy own hands

Cut short my thread of life, that act had been
Of kindness more expressive...
Cae. O my son!...
Bru. O Cæsar, yield...
Cae. Unnatural,... ungrateful...
What wouldest thou then do?
Bru. Or rescue Rome,
Or with her meet my death.
Cae. I will reclaim thee,
Or perish by thy hands. Unparallel'd
And horrible is thy ingratitude...
Yet, hence I hope that horror and repentance
Will visit thee, before to-morrow's dawn
Shall see us in the senate-house assembled.—
But, if thou then, ungrateful one, persist
Not to accept me for a father; then,
If, as a son, thou still disdain to share
With me the whole; on that same dawn shalt thou
Find me again thy lord.
Bru. —Ere then, I hope,
Thy shame and horror, when thou find'st thyself
A tyrant to no purpose, will have changed thee
To a true father.—In my breast at once
A son's affection cannot blossom forth,
If first thou do not give to me a proof,
Sublime and strong, of thy paternal love.
A father's is the first of all affections;
And in thy heart it ought to conquer. Then,
The most submissive, the most tender son,
The most affectionate that e'er was seen,
Then wilt thou find in me... And as thy son,
What joy then, what devotion, and what pride,
O father, shall I feel!...
Cae. Thou art my son,
Whatever I may be: nor e'er canst thou,
Unless thou'rt impious, turn against thy father...
Bru. My name is Brutus; and to me is Rome
A sublime mother!—Ah! compel me not
To deem that Roman Brutus, who gave life
And liberty to Rome at the expense
Of his own children's blood, my sole true father.

Scene III.

CÆSAR.

Cae. Unhappy I! . . . And can it then be true,
That, while I fetter all the conquer'd world,
My son alone will not be conquer'd by me?

ACT IV.

Scene I.

CASSIUS, CIMBER.

Cim. That which I say to thee is certain: hence
A short time since was Brutus seen to go;
With troubled countenance, his eyes suffused
With tears, tow'rds his own house he went. O! could
He ever change? . . .
Cas. Ah no! Rome Brutus loves;
And he loves glory and integrity.
Soon, as he promised, will he come to us.
I do rely and trust in him e'en more
Than in myself. Each word and deed of his
Spring from a lofty heart; the interests
Of Rome alone he weighs and contemplates.
Cim. Behold him here.
Cas. Did not I tell thee so?

Scene II.

BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CIMBER.

Bru. What may this mean? I find you here alone?
Cas. And are we few, when thou'rt united to us?
Bru. Tullius is wanting . . .
Cim. Art thou not aware?
Erewhile with many other senators
From Rome precipitately he departed.
Cas. The frost of years hath paralysed in him
His pristine ardor and his virtue . . .

Bru. But
Hath not extinguish'd them. Ah, let no Roman
Dare to despise illustrious Cicero.
For a more fortunate conjuncture, or
For Rome's advantage, he reserves (I swear it)
His liberty and life.
Cas. O happy we!
Certain at least are we, to gain, with freedom,
An honor'd and an honorable age;
Or, in the bloom of life, with Rome to perish.
Bru. Ah! yes; ye're blest indeed! . . . Not so am I;
To whom the horrible alternative
Alone remains, of living as a slave,
Or dying by a death unnatural.
Cas. What dost thou mean?
Cim. And what hast thou derived
From thy long talk with the dictator?
Bru. I? . . .
Nothing for Rome; immeasurable grief
And horror for myself; for you amazement,
Perchance mix'd also with a just contempt.
Cim. For whom?
Bru. For Brutus.
Cim. We, . . . contempt for thee?
Cas. Thou, who the soul art both of Rome, and us? . . .
Bru. I am, . . . who would have thought it? Hapless I! . . .
I hitherto esteem'd myself the nephew
And son-in-law of Cato the divine; . . .
And I'm the offspring of the tyrant Cæsar.
Cim. What do I hear? Can it be so? . . .
Cas. And be it:
This hinders not that Brutus still should be
The tyrant's most inexorable foe:
Ah! Cassius swears it.
Bru. A most unexpected
And dreadful stigma on my blood I find;
To cleanse it, I should shed it all for Rome.
Cas. O Brutus, thou thy own son shouldst have been.
Cim. But yet, what evidence did Cæsar bring thee?
How on his word rely? . . .

Bru. Ah! evidence
But too decisive he adduced to me.
He from the first spoke to me as a father:
Henceforth he wish'd that I should share with him
His execrable pow'r, and afterwards
Should be its infamous inheritor.
Yet human tears from his despotic eyes
Ceased not to fall; and he to me unfolded,
As to a son, the darkest labyrinths,
Unblushingly, of his corrupted heart.
At length, to make me perfectly convinced,
He made me read (O Heav'ns!) a fatal letter.
With her own hand, Servilia wrote it to him.
In that disastrous letter, which was written
And read by him ere the Pharsalian trumpet
Had utter'd the first signal for attack,
Servilia apprehensively reveals
And proves, that I'm the offspring of their loves;
And in concise and energetic words,
Conjureth Cæsar not to make himself
The murd'rer of his son.

Cim. O fatal secret!
Why didst thou not in everlasting night
Remain conceal'd? . . .

Cas. If as a son he loves thee,
In seeing in thee so much genuine virtue,
In hearing thy sublime and sturdy thoughts,
How could the spirit of a father true
Ever resist thee? Thou hast now brought back
Indubitable proof from him, that nothing
Can rescue Cæsar from his vile delusion.

Bru. Sometimes e'en yet to his deluded mind
Truth penetrates, but with a feeble ray.
Accustom'd long to military sway,
A fatal error absolutely rules him;
He deems consummate pow'r, consummate glory;
So he persists to wish for this, or death.

Cim. So great a monster, let him then have death.

Cas. He is a fix'd incorrigible tyrant.
Think now then that a citizen of Rome,
O Brutus, has no father . . .

Cim. Think, moreover,
That he who is a tyrant has no sons . . .
Bru. And that in heart will Brutus ne'er have peace.—
Yes, in your presence now, high-minded friends,
This I confess: to you, who feel at heart
Nature's affections sacred and sublime;
To you, who take the impulse and the law
That prompt this lofty necessary deed,
Which we are now resolved to execute,
From nature's self; to you, who now are panting,
With me, for ever to annihilate
That tyranny which severs and divides
And blasts each holiest tie, to make alone
Children secure within their father's bosoms;
To you I fear not to show all the grief
And all the horror, which, in rivalry,
Little by little, tear my heart to pieces,
Who am the son of Cæsar and of Rome.
Before the tyrant's face I show'd myself
His bitter and inexorable foe;
Nor did a word of mine, a look, a tear,
Show weakness in me: but no sooner I
Had left his sight, than by a thousand furies
My spirit was beset. I flew from him
To my own Lares: there, it is my lot
Always to find a sure alleviation
And fortifying counsel, and a heart
Far more sublime than mine: yes, Cato's daughter,
Equal to Cato, the illustrious Porcia,
My Lares dignifies, as wife of Brutus . . .
Cas. Worthy of Cato and of Brutus is
That high-soul'd woman.
Cim. Ah! could this be also
Said of Servilia!
Bru. Troubled as I was,
She welcomed me with countenance serene
And resolute, though now for many days
She had lain sick. Before I spake to her,
She cried to me: "Thou, Brutus, hast conceal'd
"Long in thy bosom mighty purposes;
"I never dared to question thee of them,

"Till by a certain, but ferocious, test
"I had myself my courage fully known.
"See; I am not a woman."—Saying this,
She let the foldings of her mantle fall,
And show'd to me a large and dreadful wound
Beneath her breast. Then she continued thus:
"With this right hand, and with this very dagger,
"Now many days since, this wide wound was made:
"It has been evermore conceal'd from thee,
"And by my heart inflexibly supported,
"Although my weakly frame in sickness languish'd;
"At length this wound, if I am not deceived,
"Renders me worthy both to hear and keep
"The secrets of my Brutus."
Cim. What a woman!
Cas. What man can be compared to her?
Bru. I fell
Prostrate before her, at a sight like this,
As my sublime and tutelary genius;
And weeping, motionless, astonish'd, mute,
I stood.—Then, reassuming speech, I told her
All the ferocious conflicts of my heart.
Seeing me weep, she wept; but her tears were
Roman, not feminine. She blamed alone
The adverse fates; and giving me perchance
The last embrace, she dared remind me yet
That I'm a son of Rome, and Porcia's husband,
And that my name is Brutus.—Never, never,
Not for an instant, was I of such names
Oblivious: and I come to swear it to you.—
I only purposed to communicate
To you the least part of my dreadful state;
And what I hitherto have said, is merely
The anguish that throbs audibly to friends.—
Now know I that I should convince you first,
That even nature cannot make me swerve
From Rome . . . But grief, unutterable grief,
Will take me afterwards, too certainly,
From the possession of myself for ever.
Cim. 'Tis true that we are Romans; but we are
Men also; not in any wise to feel

Human affections, would but be in us
Proofs of a brute ferocity . . . O Brutus! . . .
Thy words have tears extorted from my eyes.
Cas. All human impulses we ought to feel;
But before those due to our bleeding country,
Ill-used and dying, all the rest are mute:
Or, if they speak indeed, it is allow'd
To ev'ry man, save Brutus, to regard them.
Bru. In thus accounting me more than I am,
Noble and strong, thou makest me more strong
And noble than I could be by myself.—
Cassius, behold my tears are now dispersed.—
The shades of night are gath'ring fast: to-morrow
Will be the solemn day. I swear once more,
That which already is resolved among us.
On you do I implicitly rely;
Rely on me: I nothing ask of you,
Except that ye depend upon the signal
From me alone.
Cas. Ah! thou art certainly
The noblest of the Romans.—But, who comes? . . .
Cim. Whom see I? Antony!
Bru. Assuredly
Cæsar now sends him to me. Wait; and hear us.

Scene III.

ANTONY, CASSIUS, BRUTUS, CIMBER.

An. O Brutus, I come here in quest of thee:
I wish to speak with thee.
Bru. Speak on: I listen.
An. But, the dictator charged me with this message . . .
Bru. And what of that, I pray thee?
An. I should speak
To thee alone.
Bru. And here I am alone.
Cassius is husband of my sister Junia;
Cimber was friend, and the most faithful friend,
Of the great Cato, my wife's father: blood,
The love of Rome, and friendship, render us,
Though three we be in person, one in soul.

Cæsar can never utter aught to Brutus,
That he re-utters not immediately
To Cassius and to Cimber.
An. Is their father
Also the same as thine?
Bru. They too have shared
With me the shame and sorrow of my birth:
They know it all. Speak on.—I am assured
That Cæsar, gen'rous, once again himself,
Sends thee to take from me the past disgrace
Of having been erewhile a tyrant's son.
Divulge the whole, be quick: thou canst not have
Witnesses more acceptable than these
Of Cæsar's change sublime,—that, from a king
As he was lately, to a citizen.—
Make haste; his new-born lofty love for Rome
Reveal to us; his true paternal views
Tow'rds me; that I may bless the day in which
He gave me being.
An. —The dictator charged me
To speak to thee alone. A true and blind,
As well as wretched father, he would yet
Flatter himself, that thou wouldst yield at last
To nature's sacred and persuasive voice.
Bru. And in what fashion am I then to yield?
To what submit myself? . . .
An. To love and honor
The author of thy life: or if, perchance,
Thy hard heart is incapable of love,
Not to betray thy most imperious duty;
To show thyself not mindless and unworthy
Of benefits received; and finally
To merit those which he reserves for thee
In future.—Dost thou fear to be too human,
If thou submit to this?
Bru. Those words which now
Thou givest artfully to me, are empty;
Advance, and answer me. Is Cæsar ready
To-morrow, in full senate, to renounce
The office of dictator? is he ready
His standing army to disband? to free
The Romans from their universal terror?

To free from this, his friends, foes, and himself?
To give back life to our most sacred laws,
Which he has spurn'd and shatter'd and destroy'd?
To be the first to place himself beneath them?—
These are, yes these, the benefits express,
Which a true father can confer on Brutus.
An. Enough.—Wouldst thou say more to me?
Bru. I say
No more to him who merits not to hear me.—
Return, then, to thy lord, and say to him,
That yet I hope, nay, more, I trust, am certain,
That in the senate, at to-morrow's dawn,
He will propose both great and useful things
For Rome's prosperity and liberty:
Tell him, that then, before assembled Rome,
Brutus will first fall prostrate at his feet,
As citizen and son; if he too be
A citizen and father. Lastly, tell him,
That in my heart I burn as much to make
Rome live again for all of us, as I
Burn to make Cæsar live again for her . . .
An. I understand thee.—I will tell him that
Which I (too fruitlessly, alas!) already
Long since have said to him.
Bru. Thee I esteem
A faithless and malignant messenger
'Twixt Cæsar and myself: but, if so be
That he for this selected thee, thou hast
Thy answer now received from me.
An. If Cæsar
Consulted me, or Rome's true interests,
No other messenger would he dispatch
To Brutus, than the lictors with their axes.

SCENE IV.

BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CIMBER.

Cim. Heard ye? . . .
Cas. O Brutus! . . . thou'rt the god of Rome
Cim. This arrogant and despicable slave,
He also should be punish'd . . .
Bru. He, methinks,

Would not be worthy of our wrath.—My friends,
I make the last experiment to-morrow:
If it be vain, we mutually have promised
That I should give, and ye obey the signal:
Will ye confide in me?
Cas. Thou art our all.—
Let us depart from hence: it is now time
To go hence to the few whom we have chosen;
And who are ready for the sake of Rome
To die with us to-morrow.
Bru. Let us go.

ACT V.

The Scene is in the Curia of Pompey.

SCENE I.

BRUTUS, CASSIUS, *Senators, who in succession take their places.*

Cas. It seems to me this meeting will be small;
Much smaller than the last . . .
Bru. Provided that
The hearts of the remainder be but firm,
'Tis all we want.
Cas. Dost thou, O Brutus, hear
How the unquiet people, with their cries,
Already make the firmament resound?
Bru. Their cries they vary at each new event:
Leave them; e'en they perchance to-day may help us.
Cas. I never saw thee calm as thou art now,
And so secure.
Bru. The danger's near.
Cas. O Brutus! . . .
Brutus, I yield to thee alone.
Bru. Great Pompey,
Who breathes in sculptured marble here, and seems
Now to preside o'er our few partisans,
Makes me secure as to the coming danger.
Cas. Behold, the tyrant's lictors now draw nigh.
Bru. Casca and Cimber, where? . . .

Cas. They fiercely have
Forestall'd by violence the post of danger:
They closely follow Cæsar.
Bru. Hast thou thought
Of hindering the impious Antony? . . .
Cas. Yes: Fulvius and Macrinus will at length
Keep him engaged at distance from the senate;
If it be also needful to obstruct him,
This will they do by force.
Bru. Now, all stands well.
Let each one take his place.—Farewell, O Cassius!
We from each other separate as slaves;
Soon, as free men, I hope, shall we embrace,
Or dying.—First shalt thou be witness here
To the last efforts of a son; and then
To the last efforts of a citizen.
Cas. O Brutus! on thy nod depends each weapon.

Scene II.

Senators seated. Brutus *and* Cassius *in their places.* Cæsar, *preceded by the Lictors, who afterwards leave him;* Casca, Cimber, *and many others, follow him. All rise at the entrance of* Cæsar, *and continue standing till he has taken his seat.*

Cae. What can this mean? Scarce half the senate here,
Though the appointed hour be past? . . . But I
Beyond my duty have delay'd my coming.—
Ye conscript fathers, I lament that thus
I have detain'd you . . . But yet, what can be
The cause that takes from me so many of you?
(*Universal silence.*)
Bru. Does no one answer?—The demanded cause
Is known to all of us.—Is it not, Cæsar,
Fully divulged to thee by this our silence?—
But, wouldst thou hear it?—Those whom thou see'st here,
Terror collected; those whom thou see'st not,
Terror dispersed.
Cae. I am not unaccustom'd
To the intemperate harangues of Brutus;
As to the gen'rous clemency of Cæsar

Thou art not unaccustom'd.—But in vain;
For here I came not to dispute . . .
Bru. Nor we
Thee idly to offend.—Those fathers surely
Were ill-advised who vanish'd from the senate
On such a joyful day: and ill act those,
Who in the senate now stand mute.—Myself,
Fully apprised of the high sentiments
Which Cæsar purposes to utter to us,
Can scarce restrain the impulses of joy;
And feel an eager wish to dissipate
The false alarm of others.—Ah! no, now
Cæsar doth not within his bosom cherish
Against his country any guilty purpose;
Ah no! that gen'rous clemency of his,
With which to-day he has upbraided Brutus,
And which in future he should not exert
Tow'rds me, to trembling and afflicted Rome
He hath directed all of it already.
To-day, I swear to you, great Cæsar adds
A new one, and the most sublime of all,
To his so many triumphs; hence he here
Presents himself, the victor of himself,
And of the envy of his adversaries.
Yes, noble fathers, this I swear to you;
Cæsar to-day assembles you to this
His glorious triumph: he once more would be
The equal of his fellow-citizens;
This will he be spontaneously: and hence,
'Mid all the men that have been in the world,
There never was, nor will be, Cæsar's equal.
Cae. I might, O Brutus, interrupt thy speech . . .
Bru. Nor let it seem to you rash arrogance
That I, when scarce a prætor, thus should dare
Anticipate the words of the dictator.
For Brutus now and the illustrious Cæsar
Are but one person.—I behold your brows
Arch'd with amazement: to the senators
My language is obscure; but speedily,
With but one single word, the mystery
Will I explain.—I am the son of Cæsar . . .
(An universal cry of astonishment.)

Bru. Yes; I am born from him; and in this fact
No little pride I feel; since this day Cæsar
Becomes, from a perpetual dictator,
Perpetual and first of citizens.
(*An universal cry of joy.*)
Cae. . . . Yes, Brutus is my son; I told myself
Erewhile to him this secret. Yes, the boldness,
The eloquence, impetuosity,
I know not what of superhuman force
That breathes in his discourse, made on my heart
A deep impression: ardent, and aspiring,
My genuine son, is Brutus. Hence, O Romans,
I choose him, far more worthy than myself,
To do for you that service after me,
Which now no longer lies within my power:
I have decided to transfer to him
My whole authority; in him have I
Establish'd it: in him will ye have Cæsar . . .
Bru. I stand secure: not Brutus' enemies
The most embitter'd and implacable,
Much less his friends, then, ever will believe him
Of this e'er capable; ah no!—To me,
Cæsar, O Romans, yields his pow'r: he would
Imply by this, that Cæsar abdicates,
At the entreaties of myself his son,
His pow'r unjust, and now replaces Rome
In liberty for ever.
(*An universal cry of joy.*)
Cae. 'Tis enough.
Thou as my son, and younger than myself,
Shouldest keep silence in my presence.—Now,
Cæsar, O fathers, speaks.—I have resolved
Irrevocably in my secret thoughts
To go against the Parthians. And to-morrow
I march 'gainst Asia with my faithful legions:
There have I long been summon'd, and by force
Dragg'd onward, by the unavenged shade
Of Crassus. Antony I leave to Rome;
In him let Rome behold a second Cæsar:
Let Cassius, Cimber, Casca, now return
To their allotted provinces: my side
Brutus shall never quit. When I have slain

The enemies of Rome, I will return
And to my enemies submit myself:
Then, at her will, whichever she likes best,
Rome shall possess me as her citizen,
As her dictator, or discard me quite.
(*Universal silence.*)
Bru. —These words which we have heard, were certainly
Not accents of a Roman, of my father,
Or e'en of Cæsar; but the harsh commands
Of a despotic king.—Ah! father, yet
Hear me once more; behold my tears, and hear
The' entreaties of a son and citizen.
Hear me; all Rome by my mouth speaks to thee.
Behold that Brutus, whom no man e'er saw
Hitherto weep or supplicate; behold him
Prostrate before thee. Wouldst thou be to Brutus,
And not to Rome, a father?
Cae. I will not
Listen to prayers which are a public insult.
Rise, and be mute.—He dares to call me tyrant;
But, I am not one: if I were, had I
Myself permitted him to offer me
Such gross indignities before all Rome?—
What the dictator in his mind hath fix'd,
Should all be executed. Thus command
The interests of Rome; and ev'ry man
Who doubts now, or refuses to obey me,
Is enemy of Rome; to her rebellious,
He is an impious traitor.
Bru. —Then let all
Of us now, as true citizens should do,
Obey dictators thus![1]
Cim. Die, tyrant, die.
Cas. And let me smite him also.
Cae. Traitors . . .
Bru. Ah!
And must I be the only one to spare him? . . .
Some Senators. Die, let the tyrant die.
Other Senators, flying. O day of horrors!

[1] Brutus unsheathes his dagger, and brandishes it aloft; the conspirator dart towards Cæsar with their swords.

Cae.[1] Son, . . . and thou too? . . . I die . . .
Bru. O Rome! . . . O father . . .
Cim. But, at the cries of the pale fugitives,
The people flock already in a crowd . . .
Cas. Let them come in: the tyrant is no more.
Let us now hasten to slay Antony.

Scene III.

PEOPLE, BRUTUS, CÆSAR *dead.*

People. Say, what has happen'd now? what meant those cries?
What blood is this? Ah, Brutus yonder stands
Immovable with his uplifted dagger?
Bru. People of Mars, (if yet ye are so) thither,
Yes, thither turn your looks: behold who lies
At mighty Pompey's feet . . .
People. What! Cæsar? Horror!
He in his blood immersed? . . . O rage!
Bru. Yes; Cæsar
Lies in his blood immersed: and I, though ye
See in my hand a blade not stain'd with blood,
I too, with others, I too slaughter'd Cæsar . . .
People. Ah, traitor! thou shalt die . . .
Bru. Already, see,
The weapon's point is turn'd against my breast:
I wish to die: but, listen to me first.
People. Let those be slain the first who murder'd Cæsar . . .
Bru. Ye seek in vain for other murderers:
Dispersed amid the fluctuating crowd,
The slayers have already disappear'd:
Save Brutus, 'tis in vain for ye to seek
Another murderer. If ye are led
By fury here, and would avenge the death
Of the dictator, let the life of Brutus
Now pacify your vengeance.—But, if yet
The name of true and sacred liberty
Re-echoes in your hearts, and in your souls,
Open your bosoms to excessive joy:

[1] Oppressed with wounds, dragging himself to the statue of Pompey, where, having covered his face with his robe, he dies.

There lies he dead, there lies he dead at last,
The king of Rome.
People. What is it that thou sayest?
Bru. The king of Rome, yes, I confirm it to you,
And swear that he was such: he was a king:
Such spake he here; and such he show'd himself,
During the Lupercalia, to yourselves,
That day, when he, pretending that he scorn'd
The guilty crown, yet three times made the hand
Of Antony refit it on his head.
The infamous collusion pleased you not;
And he became convinced by certain proof,
That, save by force, he ne'er would be a king.
Hence, he would now have left Rome for the camp,
Planning new wars, while she is quite exhausted
Of men and arms and treasures; certain hence
By dint of arms here to return a king,
And make you with harsh penalties repent
The interdicted crown. Gold, flatt'ries, games,
Banquets, and spectacles, he lavish'd on you,
To make you slaves: in vain the impious one
Made the attempt; ye Romans would not sell
Your liberty; and still I see you all
Ready to die for it: and I am also,
I, yes, as much as you. Rome now is free;
Brutus would now die satisfied. Be quick;
And sacrifice him who restores to you
Life, liberty, and virtue: yes, do ye
Sacrifice Brutus to avenge your king:
Behold my breast defenceless . . . let him kill me,
Who still would be a slave.—But he ought now
Who will not murder me, to follow me,
And terminate the enterprise by force.
People. What words are these? A god inspires him . . .
Bru. Ah!
I see the former parasites of Cæsar
Become, by little and by little, Romans.
Now hear if Brutus also be a Roman.—
Are there among you who have hitherto
E'en ever dreamt of that which I am now
About to tell you with a solemn oath?—
The tyrant Cæsar was my real father . . .

People. O Heav'ns! what is it that thou tellest us? . . .
Bru. I am the son of Cæsar; this I swear;
He himself yesterday reveal'd to me
The secret; and I swear to you, he wish'd
To leave me, pledge of his paternal love,
As if it were his proper heritage,
Tranquil and undisputed, wish'd one day
To leave me his authority in Rome.
People. O vile audacity! . . .
Bru. And thence he dared
Discover all his guilty views to me . . .
People. Then (ah, too certainly!) he did design
At length to show himself a thorough tyrant . . .
Bru. I, as a son, wept, and entreated him:
And also, as a citizen, conjured him
To drop the infamous design: ah! what
Did I not do, to change him from a king? . . .
I e'en entreated from him as a gift
Death; which from his hands I should more have prized
Than all his surreptitious royalty:
But all in vain: in his tyrannic breast
He had resolved to reign, or die. I then
The signal gave to kill him; I myself
Gave it to a firm few: meanwhile on high
I raised my trembling and suspended arm . . .
People. O pristine virtue! O true Brutus!
Bru. Yes;
The king of Rome is slain; for this should we
Pay homage to the gods . . . but yet has Brutus
Slain his own father; . . . and he merits death
From you . . . And think ye I would live? . . . I ought
For a few instants still; while I exert
Myself with you to give security
To Rome's regenerated commonwealth:
The lofty duties yet must be fulfill'd
Of citizen, and of deliverer;
For these alone doth Brutus still live on:
But a high obligation furthermore
Condemns the impious parricidal son
Of the great Cæsar to destroy himself,
With his own hands, upon his father's tomb.
People. O dire event! . . . Amazement, terror, pity; . . .

O, what a multitude of impulses
Must we at once experience? . . . But . . . O sight!
E'en 'mid his fury, Brutus doth himself
Also dissolve in tears? . . .
Bru. —I weep, O Romans;
I weep for Cæsar dead. Sublime endowments,
Not to be equall'd in the world; a soul,
Which never had its counterpart, had Cæsar:
Base is that heart which weeps not for him dead.—
But, who dares now again to wish him living,
Is not a Roman.
People. Thine are words of fire,
O Brutus . . .
Bru. May yours, then, be deeds of fire;
The task is lofty; worthy of ourselves:
Follow my steps; and let us now restore
Full and eternal liberty to Rome.
People. For Rome, ah! yes, upon thy steps we're ready
For all; for any thing . . .
Bru. Make speed then, now
Let us go quickly to the Capitol;
That is the sacred seat of liberty:
Would ye now leave it in the hands of traitors?
People. Let us depart: and wrest from traitors' hands
The sacred citadel.
Bru. To death, to death
Or freedom let us go.[1]
People. To death, to death
With Brutus, or to freedom we depart.

[1] Brutus moves forward, fiercely brandishing his sword; the people all follow him with fury.

THE AUTHOR'S FAREWELL.

Reason enjoins me from my feet to doff
(If I ere wore it) the Italian buskin,
And swear that I will never don it more.

ANNO MDCCLXXXVII.

XX.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE personages in this, the earliest of Alfieri's plays, (it having been written by him at the age of 25, and first performed at the Carignan Theatre, Turin, on the 16th of June, 1775, "both to his disgrace and good fortune," as he expresses it,) are Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt; Ismene and Diomedes, her faithful female and male attendants; Marc Antony, her lover; the Emperor Augustus, Antony's conqueror in the battle of Actium; Canidius, a follower of Antony; and Septimius, a follower of Augustus. The scene is laid not long after the battle, and in the year 30 B.C.

The play opens with Cleopatra lamenting to Ismene her hard lot, owing to the probable defeat of Antony by Augustus. She is overwhelmed by remorse at having fled from the battle, and thus brought about that defeat; but confesses that ambition, and not love, is the one ruling motive of all her actions. Diomedes enters and announces that the flying fleet had entered Alexandria in confusion, Antony having deserted his forces. Canidius comes and gives full particulars of the defeat, and the strange disappearance of Antony. As soon as Cleopatra is alone, she ceases dissembling, and rejoices in the success of her schemes so far, and avows her intention of trying to win Augustus's heart, though with some misgivings as to her ill-treatment of Antony.

Antony himself appears in the second Act, denouncing his own folly and unhappy love for the Egyptian queen.

He repeats his lamentations to Diomedes, who tells him of Cleopatra's unhappiness, and of the rout of the fleet, which he had not before known. Cleopatra enters, and he upbraids her for her treachery, while acknowledging that he still loves her. She invites him to kill her, and goes on to pretend that her flight from the battle arose from her love for him, and her anxiety to put down a pretended conspiracy against them in Egypt in their absence. He ends by announcing his intention of meeting Augustus in battle and falling nobly there. She tells Diomedes that she intends triumphing over both the victor and the vanquished.

The third Act discloses Cleopatra confiding to Ismene that arrangements have been secretly made for the Egyptian troops and ships deserting to Augustus as soon as the intended fight begins. Antony enters and tells her that her plot has succeeded, and that he is utterly vanquished and disgraced; and when she still pretends to love him, he gives her his sword, and asks her to kill herself first, promising to slay himself directly afterwards. She refuses to do so, but asks him to strike the fatal blow, saying that he will find his image deeply engraven in her heart. He then takes the weapon, intending to kill himself, but Diomedes appears and stops him, and tells him that Augustus is close at hand. The latter, attended by Septimius, enters and addresses his conquered foe and former friend kindly. Antony recalls the past, and his claims to be the first man in Rome after Cæsar's death, but says that he would not have taken up arms against Augustus, if the latter had not insisted on being his superior. Augustus reminds him of his cruel treatment of his own wife Octavia, and of his having sacrificed the interests of Rome for the sake of Cleopatra and her family. Antony recriminates, though not denying his errors. Augustus invites him to leave Egypt and return at once to Rome; but implies that Cleopatra is destined to grace his own triumph there. When alone with Septimius, Augustus announces his intention of procuring Antony's death at the hands of Cleopatra, and of having her, too, put to death after she has been disgraced by following his triumphal car.

Act IV. shows Cleopatra preparing for her interview

with Augustus, and hoping to gain his love. Diomedes warns her against trusting him. Augustus joins her, and she employs all the arts of flattery upon him, and claims the merit of having aided him in his late victories, professing to care no longer for Antony. Augustus hints his intention of letting her share the throne of Rome with himself. She urges the destruction of Antony, who now enters, and they agree to dissemble with him. He is distracted at seeing Augustus and Cleopatra together, and accuses her of treachery. Augustus tries to calm him, and he asks the conqueror still to keep Cleopatra and her family on the throne, as he cannot overcome his love for her, expressing his own readiness to die. Cleopatra affects to implore Augustus for both Antony and herself. Augustus professes to pardon both, and to leave them to reign in Egypt together. Augustus then departs, and Antony tells her that he will go to the temple to take counsel of the gods as to the course he should pursue, though scorning to live a life of dishonor. She exults over his credulity, when he has gone, and forthwith orders Diomedes to kill him.

The last Act begins with Diomedes telling the Queen that he has obeyed her commands. She rejoices at the news and tells Augustus, who now enters, of it. He laments Antony's death, and denounces the treachery of Cleopatra, who is confounded at his language. He orders her to start for Rome to grace his triumph. She is in despair, and vows to slay Augustus, but at that moment Antony himself, to her astonishment, appears, Diomedes having invented the story of his death. Antony upbraids her for her treachery. She acknowledges that every passion except fury is extinguished in her. Augustus comes, and all the characters are assembled on the stage. Antony addresses him in a speech of proud defiance, and stabs himself. Augustus orders Cleopatra to be dragged away, but she too is in time to inflict the same death on herself with her dagger, and she expires, cursing Augustus.

It will be seen that the catastrophe in the tragedy is different from that given in history and also by Shak-

speare, who makes Antony kill himself on a false report of Cleopatra's death, whilst she died from the bite of an asp. The play was several times rewritten by Alfieri, who frequently spoke contemptuously of it, by such names as "abortion," "refuse," &c. In one place he describes it as "the first tragic and lyric attempt of a sucking poet." Father Paciaudi, in a friendly letter written early in 1775, criticises the work, as it then stood, severely. After praising the spirit, fertile imagination and arrangement of the play, he says that the verses are often badly turned, and that the orthography is defective and vicious, and reminds him that a writer ought to understand well the language in which he writes. He advises him to read Maffei's *Teatro Italiano*, and especially a *Cleopatra* in it, written by Cardinal Delfino. In fact, at that time Alfieri knew more of French (in which the tragedy was first written) than of Italian, and less of Latin and Greek than either. The work as finally published was entirely rewritten from beginning to end, and is an immense improvement on the original version, of the origin of which he gives a detailed and amusing account in his Life. Suffice it here to say that he wrote it at random whilst attending on the sick bed of a lady to whom he was attached, the original characters being Lachesis, Photinus, and Cleopatra, and "with no idea whether it was to turn out a tragedy or comedy; whether it was to be in one, five, or ten acts." When the lady got well, it was forgotten by him, and put under the cushion of her easy chair, where it remained for a year; "and my earliest attempts at tragedy were brooded over, as it were, by the lady herself, who sat on the chair habitually, and by any person who happened to sit down upon it." Alfieri wrote a detailed analysis of the play, called "Sentimento dell' Autore," in which he highly complimented himself on the fifth Act. The *Cleopatra* was first published in 1804, Alfieri having died the year before.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EGYPTIANS.	ROMANS.
CLEOPATRA.	ANTONY.
ISMENE.	CANIDIUS.
DIOMEDES.	AUGUSTUS.
	SEPTIMIUS.
	Guards of Augustus.

SCENE.—*Alexandria, in the Palace of Cleopatra.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

CLEOPATRA, ISMENE.

Cleo. What shall I do? . . . Great Gods! . . . I see not how
I may escape the dreadful precipice.
I picture to my mind each state of life,
However vile and wretched; ev'ry danger
I weakly conjure up, and none of all
Can boldly face or fly from: cruel doubts
Distract my breast, but neither let me die,
Nor give me back again repose and life.
Horror assails me; honor and a kingdom
Cannot reward a cruel treachery:
Methinks I both have lost; and Antony,
Yes, him I see at times amongst the shadows,
Crying for vengeance, hurrying me along.
How terrible, Remorse, thy pow'r appears!

Ism. Have pity on thyself, and curb the movements
Of a despairing heart! Fear'st thou nought else,
Than not again to see that faithful lover?
But thou know'st not as yet if he is victor
Or vanquish'd, dead or living.
Cleo. If alive,
Say, with what face or how I dare appear
Before his presence, if I have betray'd him?
What is the unknown force of virtue, if
A guilty one can stand beneath its gaze?
Ism. No, queen, that heart can ne'er so guilty be,
Which still doth feel remorse . . .
Cleo. Ah, yes, I feel it;
By night, by day, accompanied, alone,
It ev'rywhere pursues me; its sad presence
Leaves me in peace for not one single moment.
And yet, it cries in vain; within my soul
It only serves to wake the direst passions;
Nor canst thou see the nature of my heart.
My mind revolves a thousand darksome thoughts,
But cruel doubt, the worst of all my ills,
Still will not let me make the needful choice.
Ism. Why, Cleopatra, didst thou hoist the sails
Of Egypt's fleet, and fly, whilst Actium's sea
In all directions swarm'd with friendly ships?
Whilst the whole world, intent upon the strife,
Was ready to become the victor's prey,
What could impel thee to thy hasty flight?
Cleo. It is not love that poisons now my days;
Ambition to command has ever moved me.
Each path, and none in vain, have I assay'd,
Which could conduct me to that lofty end;
My other passions all succumb'd to this,
And others' passions minister'd to mine.
Cæsar was first, who proudly bade me share
His glorious diadem; and not alone
To Egypt gave I laws; whatever land
Obey'd Rome's sway, and own'd him conqueror,
I then saw subject to my ev'ry nod.
My heart the prize was of a lofty crown,
And none save he who ruled the world possess'd it.

A throne, which I had thus long time endow'd
With virtue, and with honor, and with faith,
I would not trust to an uncertain issue,
And the unequal fate of faithless armies...
I thought to save it; and by flight I lost it;...
On this defenceless spot my footstep trembles;
And to disarm my conquering enemy
Nought now remains to me except my tears...
Too late my sorrow, and a fault so great
Tears only make more vile, but cannot cancel.

Ism. O queen, thy sorrow needs must pity wake
In ev'ry heart, but pity is but vain;
Now be thyself once more, dry up thy tears,
And view misfortune with more fearless eye;
Despair not; for a regal soul is bound
To show itself superior to misfortune.
Adopt whatever means appear most fit
To save, or, at the least, defend thy kingdom.

Cleo. Such means I see not, as I know not yet
What may have been the issue of the fight.
Until it is disclosed, I will not add
Fresh errors to the errors I have made.
I left the restless sea at Actium cover'd
With vessels, and with arms and warlike men;
So that the waves that day were red and dyed
With blood, to the disgrace and loss of Rome.
Greatest in numbers and most strong the band
Which Antony commanded; and his ships,
High raising in the air their threat'ning beaks,
Appear'd with their vast mass to overwhelm
The small frail barks of his proud enemy.
Yes, this is true; but fate and deities
Have long declared themselves Augustus' friends;
And he whose friend they're not, in vain would trust them.
Whether of Antony is fortune tired,
Whether I little know Augustus' plans,
Whether I, trembling, form but useless vows,
I cannot tell; devour'd by fearful doubts
As to my future lot, half wild, a prey
To mortal agony, what more of hope
Is left me? all my heart assures me now

That I am vanquish'd, and shall not escape
A death of infamy.
Ism. 'Tis not yet time
Thus of thy fate to utterly despair.
For who can say if to the hostile bands
Fortune may not have turn'd her back already;
Or if Augustus, clement conqueror,
May not restore to thee as much as erst
Or Antony or Cæsar gave thee?
Cleo. I
Can feed my heart with hope, when I can clearly
Distinguish 'twixt the victor and the vanquish'd;
But whilst between the rivals wavers fate,
I needs must spend my sad and painful days
In vain laments; and not with grief alone
Must I lament, but with disdain and shame.
But Diomedes comes; ... how throbs my heart!

Scene II.

DIOMEDES, CLEOPATRA, ISMENE.

Cleo. O faithful Diomedes, is it life
Or death that thou dost bring me? ... Say, what news?
Is my sad fate fulfill'd? ... Quick, speak.—
Diom. O queen,
To execute thy bidding forth I went,
And whilst descending to the shore beheld
The people madly crowding to the port;
Confused the cries I heard; but if of grief,
Of joy or stupor, I could not discern,
So went myself, and but too soon discover'd
The fatal reason of the shouts they raised:
A few disabled miserable vessels,
The wretched remnant of the haughty squadron,
The objects were of the insulting cries
Of the base mob, who ever ridicule
That which they fear not.
Cleo. Antony was there?
Diom. Canidius, leader of the flying throng,
Thought he should find him on this friendly soil.
Vainly they sought for him by land or sea:
Dispersed and vanquish'd, and in terror flying,

His soldiers, who had thither come in crowds,
More by their grief than by the foe borne down,
Called "Antony!" in feeble voice on landing:
Egypt demands from them her late defender;
In vain is ev'ry cry; the fatal echo
Of all those voices to the air is scatter'd,
Nor reaches him.

Cleo. Abandon'd and alone,
Betray'd by all, is then poor Antony?
Shall he be unavenged?

Diom. No, no, O queen!
Oft will the Deities allow frail mortals
To rage amongst themselves; but then withhold
The fruit of their misdeeds; and the betrayer
Of Antony shall not unpunish'd be.
But hope is not extinguish'd in my heart;
And be it pity, love, or justice, still
Methinks a man thus mighty is preserved
For greater ends.

Cleo. How could it be that none
Amongst his many followers saw him? how
Left he the fleet? and who was with him? Speak!

Diom. Soon as I found that he was not amongst them,
Silent and sad return'd I to thy presence,
To tell thee of our great misfortunes: soon
Canidius' self will tell thee all that pass'd.

Scene III.

CLEOPATRA, ISMENE, DIOMEDES, CANIDIUS.

Cleo. Canidius, who wert ever at the side
Of Antony, nor left him in the fight,
Thou tread'st the ground where Cleopatra reigns,
Nought knowing of him, and thou tremblest not?

Cani. Alas, no more! When conquer'd is a Roman,
Grief more than bitter speeches weighs him down.

Cleo. What was the cause of such an utter rout?—

Cani. The throng was ready for the great encounter,
And, as thou knowest, well prepared, and all
Devoted to the cause of Antony, and faithful,
Raging with passion, and with fury fill'd:

Disdaining all delay, both blood and life
Before the fight they placed at his disposal.
Ill fitted to restrain the fiery haste
Of all those legions, and myself inflamed
With equal wrath, revolved I in my mind
No other thoughts than those of death and vengeance.
At first I swore that Actium should repair
Pharsalia's sad defeat: but vain my vows!
Sudden a strange and doubtful rumor rose,
And went on growing, till the' astounding flight
Of Antony confirm'd the dreadful news:
From mouth to mouth it spread, and flew around,
As always happens with unhappy tidings:
In one short moment ev'ry one was seen
Despondingly to wander, full of fear;
It seem'd as though what valor they possess'd,
And honor, had with Antony all vanish'd.
At length the soldiers fled, and vain the' attempt
To check their terror with the name of glory.
Desponding, pallid, deaf to ev'ry sign,
The very name of glory they forgot.
No eyes had they, except for seeing danger;
Their ev'ry footstep was irresolute,
Behind them and before they found but foes.
Unhappy ones! they sought escape in flight,
And in that very flight they found their death;
A sad and cruel death, of honor reft.
All adverse were the strokes of envious fate;
That heartless one perceived that Antony
Himself alone had influence to control them.
In vain were all attempts to trace his steps;
He disappear'd, unknown to all the world:
Fame, who had spread abroad his name, when great,
Now, when abased, in pity maybe hid it.
That fatal day, which should have been the last
To all amongst us, open'd up my heart
To doubtful hopes; I thought at any rate
To have surrender'd at my master's feet
My useless life, a burden to the vanquish'd.
That death of honor which had fled from me
At Actium, on the Nile I thought to find.

But till such time as heav'n to us unfolds
His fate, for him must I reserve my days.
O happy I, if I may see the day
When, arming my right hand in his defence,
My death may prove to be of service to him!

Cleo. But how couldst thou in safety reach these shores
With all thy fugitive and trembling band?
Is not the ocean held by wise Augustus?
Did not the conquering fleet e'en to these coasts,
Embolden'd by success, pursue thee fiercely?

Cani. 'Tis probable, O queen, we owe escape
To our small forces, nothing but contempt
Awak'ning in the heart of proud Augustus.
He without doubt prepares to overcome
All that is left to Antony, collecting
The pleasant fruits of easy victory:
And since upon him friendly fortune smiles,
E'en the whole world he'll traverse haughtily.

Cleo. One moment victory waits, then flies away:
Betray'd is our great cause; in such a grief,
The sadden'd soul must needs give way. Now go,
I fain would be alone.

Scene IV.

CLEOPATRA.

Cleo. And now at last
I may pluck off the veil which hides the truth
In a dissembling heart's profound abysses.
Vanquish'd is Antony: this shame and treason
Perchance survives he not; the base design
I dared to form has been fulfill'd: so much
I could not hope for from my wicked flight.
But half the work remains for me to do,
And the most doubtful: vain are my misdeeds,
If to my fate I cannot link Augustus.
And from his heart what answer seek I? Love:
That mighty Deity, the sole perchance
Whom heroes worship, and who made me mistress
Of Antony and Julius Cæsar's fates:
Love, whom I oft inspired but never knew,

And from whose pow'r, when vanquish'd and disarm'd,
I glory drew, the very victor taming.
Sole barrier to my scheme was Antony:
If he's no more, my conquest will be easy . . .
What dost thou, Cleopatra? . . . Plunge thy stile
Once and again in Antony's own breast . . .
Rob him with one fell blow of lover, sceptre,
Honor and country, life and liberty,
Because he loved thee . . . and to love was crime?
O most ungrateful woman, to what horrors
Has thy insane ambition driven thee?
Behold . . . methinks . . . that his betrayèd spirit
Advances pale . . . and menacing; and seeks
To feed its thirst upon my faithless blood.
Ah, come! Yes, come! . . . Unarm'd I offer thee
My naked bosom . . . What? . . . thou tremblest then?
Strike, cruel one, and fear not that my eye,
So wont to soften thee, will tremble now
Before the flashing of thy vengeful steel . . .
But what? I rave . . . Shall I believe in fear?
Reign, Cleopatra; and, to reign, be daring,
Whate'er betide: canst thou not hide beneath
The splendor of the throne thy vile misdeeds,
A friendly tomb can hold both them and thee.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

ANTONY.

Ant. The horrid labyrinth in which, succumbing
To woman's artifice, thy heart was lost,
Behold once more, O Antony! 'Twere well
If, with my heart, I had not also lost
Sense, virtue, honor . . . O unfeeling marbles,
Which erst received me in your midst as king
And umpire of the world, now that I come
A fugitive and vanquish'd back again,
Disdain ye by your silence to reproach me

My cowardice? O where to hide myself! . . .
Must thou, O Earth, support the shameful weight,
As yet unknown to thee, of a vile Roman? . . .
Ye angry Gods, no pity 'twas of yours
Which from the sea, my enemies, myself,
Brought me in safety to these cursèd shores . . .
Cursèd, indeed, but yet most long'd-for shores,
In seeing you again, my breast heaves wildly.
Perfidious Love, if thou so much didst hate me,
Why, cruel one, didst thou not give me death
Of greater honor 'mongst the crowd, and worthy
Of a great courage? Love, perchance thou thoughtest
With thy most abject slaves to have confounded
The soul of Antony? . . . Ah, none more vile is! . . .
Vainly I seek the hero in myself.
Be cruel then, command! The base resolve
Which bade me follow my unfaithful lover
Was a sufficient sign of thy blind fury,
As of my servitude . . . but who draws near?
In ev'ry face in this accursèd court
I see a traitor. Diomedes only
Is faithful 'mongst them all. 'Tis he himself.

Scene II.

ANTONY, DIOMEDES.

Ant. Thy master, Diomedes!
Diom. Antony!
In Egypt thou? Inside these palace walls?
How cam'st thou to the Nile? what deity
Hid from the cruel enemy his prey,
And brings us unexpectedly to-day
Our great defender?
Ant. Now that I arrive,
Betray'd, alone, dishonor'd and unarm'd,
Thou deem'st that heav'n has brought me? rather say
That in the caves of hell the web was woven,
And in the breast of the avenging Furies,
Who made my heart grow feeble, and to-day
In cruel punishment preserved my life.
Canst thou believe it? Antony still lives,
Solely because a coward: the small bark,

To which incautiously I chose to trust
Myself and my good fame, had scarcely left
The company of my presumptuous forces,
That I might follow up the treach'rous sails,
When, by a larger enemy attack'd,
On flying only bent, and not on fighting,
For both unfitted, it must needs succumb.
A tribune, who against the Parthians once
Had fought beside me, and then turn'd his arms
Against me, was the' unworthy enemy
To whom fate made me bend; full well he knew
The face of Antony, but not his arm;
How could he know it, by my weak defence?
Seeing my wretched state, in my foe's breast
Nought was awaken'd but an odious pity
And cruel scorn: in haughty exultation
At such an easy prey, he had the daring
To grant me life and liberty as well ...
O terrible disgrace! black infamy!
The wretched gift, more bitter than all deaths,
Did Antony accept: the victor turn'd
At once his daring prow, and carried off
My honor and my virtue and the lustre
Of all my triumphs and my victories.
I, stupefied, proceeded on my way,
And now have reach'd the height of infamy.
See at what price I have attain'd these shores,
See it, and say if heav'n still favors me!

Diom. My lord, thy bitterness has cool'd the joy
Which I so sweetly felt at seeing thee.
Thy fate I pity, and thy grief I share;
Before the cruel blows of adverse fate
The soul grows harden'd, even when it loves:
But thou, ere loving, wert a Roman ...

Ant. Friend,
I understand thee, and thou mak'st me blush
When thou dost teach me virtue, which in me
Neglected is, not dead: fate and the Gods
Defy I to oppress me for the future:
Neither with vain laments nor grov'lling vows
Will I implore the end of my misfortunes:
Be what it may, I wait it fearlessly.

But what the fate of the unworthy, yet
Dear object of my love? Has Cleopatra
Arrived in safety on these shores? Quick, speak!
O how I love her still! In vain I seek
To smother in my breast the wicked flame;
For such a task, sufficeth not weak virtue.

Diom. She who has been the cause of all thy ills
Suffers still more than thou from cruel fate.
More wretched still than thou, she spends her days
In tears, a prey to terrible distress,
To fierce remorse, and ev'ry doubtful horror.
Each one in Egypt reckon'd thee as dead;
But in his flight Canidius hither came
With a few soldiers, and from him we learnt
The story of thy flight and of the rout.

Ant. Canidius here? the fleet all broken up,
And fugitive? this news alone was wanting
To make my woes complete: but, why be startled
At my poor followers' flight, when I myself
Set them the vile example? how expect
Honor in others' hearts, when mine has none?
For my base cause ought those poor souls to die,
Souls that are far more Roman than my own?
Ah, no! preserve your lives for greater ends:
If love for country does not turn your arms
Against the tyrants on behalf of Rome,
Some day to root out all the worthless race,
Fighting at least for a more glorious chief,
Die then, unconquer'd Romans, in the field . . .
But since I bear the heart of Antony
No longer, but a lover's, love demands
That I should see again the much-prized object
For whom I lost my honor: in which rooms
Hides she her sorrows? where does she repair?

Diom. At times she's wont here to converse with me:
She'll shortly come. Behold her at this moment!

Ant. O tyrant Love, how utterly dost thou
Upset my reason! why compel me guiltless
To tremble when before a criminal?
Deceitful beauty, how couldst thou conceal
A wicked heart beneath an angel's veil?

How to our loss could creep into thy breast
So much of baseness, perfidy, and fraud?

Scene III.

CLEOPATRA, ANTONY, DIOMEDES.

Cleo. Can it be true? . . . What see I? . . . Antony,
Or else his shadow? . . . dream I?
Ant. False one, I!
Thou thought'st me dead, and thy inhuman wishes
Accorded well with the untrue report;—
But I still live, and unavenged my soul
Shall never cross the pass of Acheron:
My sight disturbs thee.
Cleo. Wouldst thou, Antony,
That I with a serene dissembling face
Should joy pretend, when grief is killing me?
Grim, angry, fierce and full of threatenings
I see thee now; thee whom I left a faithful
And tender lover . . . .
Ant. Bad, ungrateful woman!
Dare not to breathe such sweet and sacred names;
They were but flatt'ry in old days, before
Thou didst betray me cruelly; and now,
Maliciously employ'd by lying lips,
Are fresh offences: yes, a traitor feels not
The flames divine of love within his breast,
And ill pretends them.
Cleo. Ah! in place of love
If in thy bosom dwells a heart so cruel,
I only shall despise thy unjust fury.
Ant. Unjust thou call'st it? must I hear such words?
Ah! turn thy eyes, and, cruel one, at pleasure
Gaze, if thou darest, on my mournful state:
Thy work contémplate, thy reward expect.
Sufficed it not if I became thy slave?
Must I be vile in sight of all the world?—
If in thy breast not love, but cruel hate,
Survives for one of too much love but guilty,
Why, cruel one, didst thou not tell him so?
Then Antony, the servant of thy wrath,

Would have himself appeased thy wicked fury.
But then to see myself reserved by thee
For such great infamy, to have to suffer
Such signal treachery . . . ah! 'tis too much . . .
Worthless, perfidious one, read in this face,
Where faith and love for thee at one time dwelt,
The base design of terrible revenge.

Cleo. My lord, what say'st thou? Hear me at the least.

Ant. Too much I've heard thee, more than thou deservest:

And then, when to this vacillating heart
Thou spakest flattering deceitful words,
Silenced were all my good affections: deaf
For the first time to honor's voice, forgetting
My country's love, my worthy spouse, the world,
To which I might have given laws, I idly
In thy base snares ignobly spent my days:
And then, when, spurning this base lethargy,
I once more saw within my hands the fate
Of Rome, and of the Empire, a vile soul
Must seek to rob me, by a coward's flight,
Of a not doubtful triumph? ah, 'tis I
Am vile! Why follow thee? The weak Egyptians
Were useless for the fight, and thou a hindrance,
Rather than an assistance, to my fame; . . .
Had I but dared one moment to despise thee,
I had been victor: and redoubled glory
Had gain'd from my magnanimous contempt:
My beaten foemen, and my vanquish'd love
Had shown to thee in me, to thy despite,
This day the first and greatest of all Romans.
The wicked cause, for which I'm well-nigh now
The last of mortals, on this fatal day,
I see before me, and I suffer it,
And (O extreme disgrace!) I still adore it.—
Yes, yes, I love thee, and thou know'st it: this
The world, my blushes, my lost honor tell thee.
My odious life I also ought to give thee;
But, if in truth the soul lives after death,
How know I whether thy unlucky image

May find me not amongst the friendly shades,
And tear my bosom, and my peace destroy?
Both life and death abhor I. Ah! now show me,
Just as one final mark of thy compassion,
How, tearing from my heart my wicked love,
I likewise from its deepest root may pluck
Its fearful, harsh, unhappy memory.

Cleo. Dost seek, barbarian, solace for thy fury?
It is not love thou feelest in thy breast,
I know it but too well: here, take this steel!
My bosom I unveil, where once thou restedst;
Thou know'st it not again, or hast forgotten;
Raise thy intrepid hand, and brandish it . . .
Then will the blood, which thou didst think unfaithful,
Rush gushing forth, and straightway dye my garments,
And fall upon my feet, and both my hands
Will reek with it; and whatsoever breath
Remains to Cleopatra, tow'rds thee turning
Eyes full of love, and death, will she collect,
To say: Farewell, I loved thee, die for thee! . . .
And then, when thou hast fed thy angry looks
On thy dead enemy, by slow degrees
Thy fury will abate, and constancy
Revive in thee again, and thy old virtue.

Ant. How, Cleopatra, hast thou gain'd such power
Thus to delude me ever? yet I love
Thy treacheries, and those deceitful accents
Have from my ear reach'd even to my heart.
I fain would find thee faithful, yet forsworn
I fear that thou wilt prove: which wilt thou be?
Doubts, horror, cruel death, O rend the veil,
The veil which utterly conceals the truth!

Cleo. Dear Antony, for pity's sake believe me!
'Twere hard to feign the sorrow that I feel.
Be calm and listen; then resume thy anger.
Condemn me innocent, absolve me guilty;
Do what thou will'st; thou shalt not hear me murmur.

Ant. Thou bidd'st me hear, and then resume my anger?
Ah! well thou know'st, that, if thou speak'st, thou'rt victor.
I must not hear thee, if I would condemn thee . . .

And yet I fain would hear thee . . . O vile snare,
Which, spite of me, enchains once more my soul,
Shall I ne'er learn to hold thee in contempt?
Cleo. If in appearances alone thou trustest,
Or in the impious band of flatt'ring friends,
Or in the unexpected sad result
Which follow'd on my flight, I then am guilty;
I've no escape: thy pity I implore.
But if thou hearest truth, I wait for justice,
And nothing fear. I left thee, Antony,
Prepared for arms and an approaching triumph.
I'll not deny the truth; and yet I loosed
The sails to save thy kingdom, thee, thy lover,
And my rash flight was but an act of virtue.
Upon that day I knew, when Rome 'gainst Rome
Prepared itself to fight, that faithless Egypt,
To us rebellious, sought its wav'ring yoke
To cast away, and, full of armèd troops,
Made ready to receive within its breast
The treach'rous foe; I suddenly perceived
That many had attain'd these shores already,
And force was added to the plots of art.
It was not fear that made me turn my feet,
Since I departed in the foeman's front,
And death and dangers for thy sake despised.
I trembled not for my ancestral throne,
Nor for my safety; when I fled from thee,
For thee alone I fled: O seek from me
No other cause; none else than thee I saw.
Useful at Actium? swift to Actium fly I.
Hope I to help thee at the Nile? behold,
My prows already reach the Nile . . . Alas,
When vainly I to help my master thought,
Dishonor'd, vanquish'd, dragg'd I him to death!
I found, on landing, all the people silent,
The traitors chased away. Spare me, O chief,
From telling thee the rest, my fierce remorse,
My pangs, grief, bitter torments, and the tears
In which I pine and shall for ever pine:
Such sorrows to recount my tongue refuses;
The heart enclosed within thy breast must tell thee,

Which knows full well the motives of my heart.
If I survived, it was not love of life,
But life in thee; I'll draw it nowhere else:
I hoped again to see thee, swear my love,
Tell thee that I was faithful, and then die.
Ant. How can I tell if thou dost feel these passions,
Or only feignest? ah! upon the face
Of wicked mortals, with no doubtful signs,
Their souls and works we ought to see impress'd.
The love which, Cleopatra, gnaws my heart,
Forbids all reasoning, and gives it thee:
But be thy words all true, or be they false,
The hour has come which must untie the knot,
And not extend it more: the world shall judge
Between us, and the minds of both shall then
Lie open. To these shores Augustus now
Approaches fast upon the wings of fortune:
I do not tremble: armed for the defence,
The weak and fugitive remains of Actium
Will find to-day a certain death in battle:
With them I'll go. The victor then shall see me,
Rising superior to my adverse fate,
Die vanquish'd there, but shall not see me fly.
O queen, farewell!

Scene IV.

CLEOPATRA, DIOMEDES.

Cleo. Ah, leave me not! . . . Didst hear?
Diom. Doubting 'tween love and virtue stands the hero.
Cleo. And hate, at all times first amongst the passions;
When 'tis the offspring of a love despised.
Believes he me no more? no more he loves me?
He scorns me? now I hate him; and I swear
That his most bitter enemy . . .
Diom. O stay!
Him thou hast made unhappy, dost insult?
Since Egypt's doom'd to pine beneath the yoke,
And serve or one or other of the rivals,
Let it choose Antony: he's great and noble:
Fierce tyrant, weak, dissembling is Augustus.

Cleo. No, both of them to Egypt fatal are . . .
And I meanwhile shall be of my disgrace,
And of the ruin of this kingdom, merely
Idle spectator? no, that ne'er shall be!
Where pow'r is wanting, art must be my friend.
I'll triumph o'er the victor, and the vanquish'd:
Thus much I hope, I'll for the work prepare me;
I will accomplish all to gain this end.

Scene V.

DIOMEDES.

Diom. Alas! defenceless virtue will succumb;
Teach'ry and fraud ne'er arm themselves in vain.
O mighty gods! was't of your love a pledge
Kings to create, or in your wrath extreme
Did ye invent them as our punishment?

ACT III.

Scene I.

CLEOPATRA, ISMENE.

Ism. At length Augustus, lord of the whole world,
Has seized upon these shores: and Antony
With a small force opposes him, but boldly.
And now, O queen, that all have taken arms,
In order to oppose the victor's entrance
Into this kingdom, why dost thou alone,
In such great peril, dread not the event
On which thy fate and Antony's depends?

Cleo. I tremble not, because I know my fate:
In vain would Antony resume his sway
Over his soldiers' hearts; he lost it when
He fled, not vanquish'd; honor he betray'd,
And victory, and all his faithful soldiers:
That desp'rate boldness e'en, with which he leads them
Unto a certain death, can ne'er repair
So great a fault. 'Tis they who will betray him.

Ism. Unto the Romans treach'ry is unknown.
Cleo. Yes, that is true; but they the more disdain
Obedience to the man who once was base.
How ignorant art thou of management,
Ismene! and in courts how little skill'd!
Dost thou suppose that the much-long'd-for fruit
Of my first flight from Actium into Egypt
I now would let escape from out my hands?
That I would trust my destiny, and that
Of a whole kingdom to the careless arm,
And useless valor of a lover blind?
I'm not so foolish, and a second plot
Is in the field prepared, to' assure the first.
The warlike trumpets scarcely will be heard
To sound the haughty signal for the fight,
When on the sea the ships, on land the cohorts,
Abandoning the leader they once own'd,
Will range themselves beneath Augustus' ensigns.
Left by their flight defenceless, Antony
Will turn against himself his bitter fury.
Ism. Great Heav'ns, O queen, what is't that thou hast done?
And what reward dost hope from this thy treason,
If still thou knowest not Augustus' thoughts?
Cleo. Mine knows he well: of his late victories
I was the instrument; though base the means
That I employ'd, they were by far too useful
For giving him the kingdom; to despise it,
Although the fruit of an unworthy fraud,
Augustus no sufficient heart possesses.
What see I? Antony in wrath advances;
With fury and with death his face is mark'd . . .
But if such ignominy he survive,
Fear, Cleopatra, not; he loves thee still.

Scene II.

ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, ISMENE.

Ant. Woman, thou now hast triumph'd, thy vile work
Is done . . . Why wert thou born, O Antony?
Dishonor'd now both Rome and Nature are . . .

Thou art to-day the scorn of the whole world;
Each one avoids thee; each despises thee;
In vain I fly myself, abhor myself . . .
More faithful enemy, thou only maybe
Darest to hate me, yes, but not despise me;
And it is well: more base than even I,
The sight of me confounds thee, makes thee tremble;
Thy guilty fear hides a more guilty hate.
O thou dissembling woman, fatal serpent,
Piercing the breast of him who gives it life:
Woman, by heav'n created in its wrath,
Who, pity not deserving, wak'nest me
Despite myself, to pity, who'rt my torment,
My very death at times, at times my life,
But always twin'st my days with infamy!
I hold my vengeance in my hand; that hand
I will not raise in vengeance: though thou knowest
How sweet it is, for 'tis thy deity,
The sole thou worshippest, the sole that feels not
Offended at thy worship . . . thankless woman . . .
Unhappy Antony! did heav'n reserve thee
For such a fatal end? make thee so great
In life one day, and then in death so wretched?
O thou fair light of day, why shine upon
Such great misdeeds, unworthy of all light?
O earth, thou oughtest, in that fatal moment,
To quake and open, and to swallow me
In thy profound abyss, and with me swallow
The mem'ry of my shame and base betrayal.

Cleo. Continue, Antony; there's more to say.
Say, that too much I woke the ire of heaven,
Upon that fatal day when first I saw thee,
When first I loved thee, and then lost myself,
My honor, my repose, my kingdom too:
In truth a fatal day: and yet a blest one,
Whose recollection still my heart rejoices:
To love thee then appear'd to me no crime;
But now I see that 'twas atrocious guilt.
Whatever cruel names, what outrages
Thy impious fury may suggest to thee,
Light punishment would be for the offence

Of loving thee one instant: other fault
I find not in myself.
Ant. Thou, Cleopatra,
With lying words wouldst once more give the lie
To earth, heav'n, hell, and sea, all bearing now
True testimony to my bitter shame.
Did I not see myself, (alas, I saw it!)
My own ships, one and all with traitors fill'd,
Whose only pity would have been to sink them,
Proceeding boldly to the hostile vessels,
Not to submerge them, not to give them battle,
But to unite themselves with them, and then,
All being enemies at once, to turn
Against me the whole weight of their rash prows?
Did I not see on land the faithless soldiers,
Who were my crown, and very front of battle,
'Mongst whom I hoped for death, if not for triumph,
Made traitors by the vile example, likewise
Withdraw both soul and foot from honor's path,
And flee, to join as friends the enemy?
Upon that treach'rous field but Antony
Remain'd: I turn'd my anxious look around,
Seeking a friend, but none was to be seen;
I sought then for an enemy, to pierce
My breast in pity, but I none could find:
I sought for death, but deaf to all the prayers
Of a vile soul was death, and turn'd its back.
What still remain'd? My love . . . my wicked love . . .
O thou black heart which, frozen, dost ignore
The flames of love, how couldst thou kindle mine?
Dost weep not, woman, at the sad, unhappy,
And wretched sight of him who loved thee so?
Cleo. The tears of a betrayer would insult thee:—
I might invoke each Deity of heaven,
And all in vain, if thou dost deem me perjured.
I will invoke the love thou once didst bear me:
By this, for it was true, I swear to thee,
That I'm not wicked, that by my misfortunes
Borne down, thy sorrows' weight oppresses me.
But, Antony, this barb'rous scorn's too much:
And if thy Romans vile and faithless were,

Why should their shame be visited on me?
Thou, who art in the art of ruling skill'd,
Thou oughtest to have advertised the traitors
That in thy camp . . .
Ant. To advertise them were
No easy thing; the haughty looks of virtue
Would not abase themselves to that extent.
Great souls are little skill'd for treachery,
And fall a prey to traitors . . . At this moment,
Thou, by thine actions, mayst belie my words.
Conquer'd is Antony; a fatal future
And adverse destiny for him prepare
Chains, infamy, or death. An equal fortune,
Since thou art not unfaithful, will be thine.
Ought I to deem thee hostile to the victor,
And true to me? Behold a certain proof . . .
Woman, thou'lt live without thine Antony,
Deprived of honor and of kingdom too;
In a vile slavery thy days shall be
With ignominy woven, scorn, and tears.
Dishonor of thy sex, by mine abhorr'd,
Pity shalt thou in vain implore from all,
And even pity shalt thou find denied thee . . .
If I could hate thee, I should feel sweet vengeance
In saving thee for a dishonor'd life . . .
Behold the final gift of hapless love,
Perchance the dearest gift to one who loves.
Behold my glaive, O queen; in it recall
That which in heroes' hands can temper fate,
And vengeance take for all its base affronts.
Why hesitate 'twixt infamy and death?
With it transfix thy heart;[1] then give it me
All reeking back—I'll then transfix my own.
Strike fearlessly . . . O Heav'ns! . . . thou turnest pale?
Cleo. This is the gift of generous Antony . . .
It comes not unexpected: thou hast always
The sacred name of virtue on thy lips,
Yet never darest tread its arduous paths;
And now, to guide thee 'mongst the shades, thou choosest
Her thou hast just despised . . . Thy gift is grateful.

[1] Gives her the weapon.

To teach thee how to die shall be my pride;
But, if I ought to-day from cruel death
To reap both fame, and honor, and a triumph,
Wanting is nought, save that thy dearer hand
Should guide the friendly steel; mine maybe, trembling,
Or little wont to strike, might give the lie
Both to my valor, and thy cruel thoughts.
Into this heart, by not an unknown path,
The' avenging blade may plunge: deep sculptured there,
Thy fatal image will be found by thee;
Thou didst impress it, thou shalt cancel it;
The dagger take, and strike . . . thou turn'st away?

Ant. Thou wouldst that I should kill thee, cruel woman?

Too much dost thou recall the impulse wild,
The rage deceitful of a lover blind.
Thou by my hand pierced through? Didst thou believe it?
At the vile thought my blood runs cold; be thou
Wicked or faithful, I had trembling pluck'd
The steel from out thy daring hand, if I
Kept it to minister to haughty wrath: . . .
Woman, if thou canst live, lament me; live! . . .
More words I cannot say; give me the dagger.[1]

Scene III.

ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, DIOMEDES, ISMENE.

Diom. My lord, what doest thou? stay, stay!

Ant. And why
Such daring on thy part? why thus attempt
To keep despairing Antony from death?

Diom. I held thy arm back, not to give thee life,
But to preserve unhurt thine ancient honor.

Ant. Doth not the steel, held by a Roman's hand,
Cancel each fault? restore his ancient honor
To him who proudly plants it in his breast?

Diom. But thou with a true Roman's hand must strike,
Not with the hand of a wild-raging lover.
Augustus comes.

[1] Takes back the weapon, in the act of killing himself.

Ant. With him let Cleopatra
Remain: I should be nought but a base witness
Of his great arrogance, her degradation,
And of my shame.
Cleo. The measure now is full
Both of my grief and of thy haughty insults.
I leave thee, Antony; O happy I
If I as the sole victim fall to-day,
Give thee thine honor back, peace give the world!

Scene IV.

ANTONY, DIOMEDES.

Ant. Do thou, too, Diomedes, go; and I
Will bear alone the sight ne'er seen before
Of him who is my victor, since I bear
The shame of my defeat . . . Let's hear Augustus . . .
Thee can I now defy, O Fate, since still
A steel possess I, which can give me death.

Scene V.

ANTONY, AUGUSTUS, SEPTIMIUS.

Aug. I come not as thy victor, Antony.
Fate is but blind; at its deceitful will,
It now gives empire, and now takes away,
And virtue oft opposes it in vain.
I should be too unworthy of its gifts,
Were I to deal with thee in haughty fashion:
Our hates, and enmities, and bickerings
In deep oblivion all shall buried be:
See not in me the rival of thy glory.
Ant. When we between us did the empire share
Of the whole world, and I departed from
Rome's glorious walls (bear witness, Heav'n, that I
Unveil my inmost thoughts!), of nought but peace
Breathed Antony, who thought of nothing else
But keeping peace amongst the Roman nations.
Thou know'st, Augustus, that from that sad day,
When cruel Sylla and the haughty Marius
Were for the first time seen to flood with blood,

And with the blood of Romans, subject Rome;
Rome from that day has never been the same.
Her pristine virtue is diminish'd now,
And vainly turning her astonish'd gaze
On her too mighty empire, has succumb'd,
Conquer'd herself, to the excessive weight; . . .
I was not born a tyrant; nature gave me
A great and gen'rous soul within my breast,
And worthy of a citizen of Rome.
But useless gift, for Rome was Rome no more!
As long as Cæsar lived, I did not scorn
Second to him in Rome to deem myself.
But he had subjugated all the world,
And having wreath'd with glorious and immortal
Laurels his brow, disdain'd the diadem,
Refusing it, as a reward not worthy
Of his great soul, superior to all crowns:
He was so great, and yet he died a death
Wicked, accurst, unworthy such a man;
Not unavenged was he: Greece, Asia knew it,
Stain'd by my hand with so much reeking gore,
That 'tis not tears alone have wash'd his tomb.—
My ancient wars, my triumphs and renown,
My glorious wounds, the age I had attain'd,
All these combined to make me first in Rome;
I also fain would be Augustus' equal;
But Antony had not recourse to arms,
Until he saw, and saw with certainty,
That thou, to be his equal, didst not deign.[1]

Aug. 'Twas no insane ambition for command
That, spite of me, impell'd me to oppose thee,
But the repeated, open wrongs with which thou
Insultedst Rome, Octavia, and the world.
Octavia, that unhappy woman, who
Thy faithful consort was, and should have been
Pledge of eternal peace, but wickedly
Despised by thee, the cause was of the war;

[1] The original contains an alternative version of the first two speeches of this scene, written by Alfieri fifteen years after the composition of the play, to show his improved style, but the thoughts in it are precisely the same.

But yet the guiltless cause: indignant Rome
With madness raved, on seeing her expell'd
From thine abode, as though Octavia were
Wicked and vile; and her expulsion woke
Laments in all who saw her by thy sons
Follow'd, to whom she show'd herself so sweet
A mother, not stepmother, midst her trials.
Thou only cruel wert, insensible
To such great virtue and a father's feelings,
Forgetting wife and children in the lap
Of base effeminacy. This was little.
The empire at thy will thou didst dismember;
Too true it is that thou whole provinces,
Whole kingdoms e'en didst take away from Rome,
To give to whom? to an unwarlike queen
Of Egypt, and her sons. The very kingdoms,
For which whole torrents ran of Roman blood
And inundated Africa and Asia,
Europe, the world itself, are now the prey
Of the Egyptian princes: and what princes!
So base, that haughty Rome would surely scorn
To reckon them amongst her very slaves . . .
Hast thought of this? ah, no! let Antony
Recall his own great soul: be he the judge!

Ant. 'Tis true I gave away whole provinces,
Whole kingdoms: thou, less generous and great,
One day didst spoil of provinces and kingdoms
Weak Lepidus, and that unhappy Sestus,
Illustrious son of Pompey the betray'd.
With them at first, and then with me thou brakest
The sworn and sacred faith of treaties e'en;
Scorning at once Rome, Antony, the gods.
Of this thou speakest not; Octavia only
The war occasion'd: strange indeed that she
Should be the cause of war between the potent
Emp'rors of Rome. I'll not deny the wrongs,
Which made me fierce and faithless to my spouse;
But they involuntary were. The world
Surrender'd and obey'd: my fatal love,
Which with its magic pow'r pervaded me,
Surrender'd not, and never would obey.

I do not blush when I recount the faults
That I through love committed; they're not base;
The soul of Antony his faults ennobles:
But that vile pact, which made me there in Rome
Octavia's spouse, and which was to annul
Between us envy, hatred, and ambition,
Could not suffice for such a task: beneath
The aspect feign'd of peace, a fatal discord
Illuminated it with glowing torch.
And the ill-omen'd ties, whose sole cement
Had been the blood in base proscriptions shed,
Could not but fatal be to all the world . . .
Thou vanquish'dst me at Actium and in Egypt;
But hast not fought with me. And ev'ry Roman,
To follow Mars accustom'd, would disdain
Such a vile victory, the horrid fruit
Of others' villainy, and not of valor.
Aug. Such victory I therefore hate, and fain
Would see extinguish'd its sad memory.
Let nought remain to me, save the great honor
Of having render'd back brave Antony
To Rome, to his own glory, to himself.
Depart, depart, my lord, these fatal shores;
They're hostile to thy honor: to thy peace
They'll ever be opposed. Let happy Rome
See us again, receive us to her bosom
As friends together, chary of her blood!
No more find pleasure in that faithless being,
For whom one day thou ceasedst to be Roman.
Abandon to her fate the' ungrateful one,
Of Antony unworthy . . .
Ant. Thou offendest,
Reminding me again that I am vanquish'd,
Insulting Cleopatra. Still I love her.
Let that suffice thee; but if not, then know
That to my shame, e'en though the faithless one
Be quite unworthy even of a sigh,
Of empire and of life still more unworthy,
Of honor least of all, I love her still.
A fatal gift of the invidious gods
Was my base love, which made me seem less great

Than they on earth . . . Out of my breast at length
I'll tear it with my life. I nothing now
Ask for myself; I shudder, and grow wild,
At the mere thought that Cleopatra, bound,
One day in Rome . . . I deem thee great, and equal
To thy great fortune.—
Aug. Antony, reserve,
Reserve thy days for a more honor'd end;
No longer turn thou back thy pitying eyes
To gaze upon the fate of those who're traitors.
Ant. Vanquish'd will Antony not live; whilst living
His thoughts change not, and what he truly loved,
He still will love, e'en to his dying sigh.
Will Cleopatra grace in Rome thy triumph?
Aug. Piteous is Rome; at times to conquer'd kings
She e'en restores an ill-defended throne.
I am a citizen of Rome, no more,
Who watches o'er her honor with arm'd hand:
The Senate, arbiter of all the world,
Is arbiter of Egypt's destiny . . .
Ant. Enough. I understand thee; from thy lips,
The names of citizen, of Rome, of Senate,
Names one day sacred, and but vain to-day,
Are but a lying veil, and but conceal
A cruel tyrant 'neath a cloak of pity.
Cruel one, triumph: pity I implored;
Thou didst refuse it, and my shame increased;
But never shall that woman be in Rome
By mortal seen as subject to Augustus,
Who once deserved the love of Antony.
Necessity has made her Roman too;
Thee will she scorn, and triumph o'er Augustus.

Scene VI.

AUGUSTUS, SEPTIMIUS.

Sept. Did not his proud and daring words, my lord,
Awaken thee to anger? why, as victor,
Didst thou reply to him, since in the vanquish'd
Such terrible presumption nestles still?
Aug. Love shall be minister of my revenge;

That love which has deprived him of his senses:
As he has lived, let the mad lover die.
Sept. But if this love to a despairing death
Has pow'r to drag unhappy Antony,
Thou shouldst be careful lest the self-same love,
Join'd to the terror of the triumph, drag
To the same fate e'en Cleopatra too.
Aug. The interested love of Cleopatra
Was the reward of heroes when successful:
No love is kept by that ambitious woman
For the unhappy conquer'd; fear alone
Now binds her to the fate of Antony;
That fear my language shortly shall dispel.
The faithless one shall be of my designs
The faithful minister; though to my rival
A thousand means I hold of giving death,
Let that be chosen which, to him most bitter
And cruel too, shall not obscure my glory.
Let Antony first perish by the hand
Of this bad woman; Cleopatra then,
Kept for the triumph, and a wretched death,
Shall reap the traitor's righteous penalty . . .
And thus my foes shall all extinguish'd be.
Sept. But crafty is the queen, and full of lies.
Aug. Let woman be deceived by woman's craft.
'Twas she prevented Antony and Julius
From perfecting their great career; made wise
By their sad fate, I will avoid the rock.
Do thou meanwhile go to the port, my friend,
Ready to sail at the first sign, and leave
The care to me of subjugating fate.
Feed, feed thy heart, thou foolish Cleopatra,
With the deceptive and injurious hope
Of reckoning Augustus 'mongst thy slaves.
Thou see'st me at thy car? with greater reason
Already see I thee attach'd to mine.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

CLEOPATRA, DIOMEDES.

Cleo. Take courage, Cleopatra; turn thine eyes
With boldness tow'rds the ruler of the world:
Thou wert for reigning born, and all in vain
Has envious fate against thee arm'd herself.
A painful death, as the last proof of love,
Offers me Antony; and life and honor
Restores Augustus, and the throne itself:
Nor does he rob me of the cherish'd hope
Of one day chaining him as slave of love.
My heart between the rivals wavers not.
What think'st thou, Diomedès?

Diom. I would tell
The queen, that Antony's unfortunate
And conquer'd; that Augustus is the victor;
That tyrants ne'er obey the voice of love;
That to a wise man's eyes sometimes the tomb
Appears of greater value than a throne.

Cleo. But thou, who wentest to search out Augustus,
Give an account of all his slightest motions.
Say, when my name thou didst pronounce, didst see
His aspect change, or blushes fill his cheek?
What didst thou notice in his eyes, the soul's
Most truthful mirrors? speak, and speak the truth.

Diom. I nothing saw but sinister events,
In the dissembling glances of Augustus;
Then when I think upon his crafty speech,
I see in him a weak and impious traitor.

Cleo. But what he said, and thought not, he to-day
Might say again more truly, and ere long.

Diom. O how ingenious art thou, O my queen,
In self-deceit! but here he comes himself:
Behold him.—

Cleo. Go: alone will I remain . . .
But what? thou throbb'st, my heart, . . . art thou not used
Full long a time to simulate the passions?

Like to a pliant serpent, seek out how
To penetrate within the tortuous paths
Of that heart, which thou fain wouldst make thy slave.

Scene II.

CLEOPATRA, AUGUSTUS.

Cleo. Suffer, my lord, a woman now unhappy,
Who once was queen, and now is made thy slave,
Before a victor, not her enemy,
Humbly to bend: my homage is not base,
If I to virtue pay it, not to fortune.

Aug. Men's homage to receive, not pay, is thine.—

Cleo. Who ever saw the gods in heav'n grow proud
Or feel offended, when with incense pure,
By our hands offer'd, smoke the sacred altars?
To see a sov'reign prostrate at thy feet,
Makes thee not proud, for others thou hast had;
Much less should be a victor such as thou
Offended at the truthful vows I bring.

Aug. Thou dost offend me, if thou call'st me victor:
I am not thine; if fate had made me so,
Rebellious to my wishes, thou hadst seen
The victor humbly bending at thy feet.

Cleo. Into the field, against my will, led arm'd
Thee to oppose, my lord, yes, led by force,
I rather was a captive than a queen;
I dreaded all along to be the victor,
And hoped from heav'n, and e'en at times I pray'd
That, spite our armies, we might be defeated.
Against the' advice of all, at Actium will'd I
That the great fight should on the waves take place,
The treach'rous waves, in ill-constructed ships:
Idle spectators from the shore I made
The mighty fleet of daring Antony;
At fighting not, I saw it fume in vain:
I robb'd it thus of glory, and of arms.
I fled, ere I was conquer'd, and at Actium
Fear'd not to let the whole world understand
The thoughts already harbor'd in my breast;
If thou, with free and undisputed march,

Hast reach'd, Augustus, to the shores of Egypt,
Nor saw on landing there one single foe,
Save helpless Antony, this too's the work
Of her whom thou didst deem thine enemy.
I say not this in hope of a reward;
I have it now, if I have partly aided
In gaining thee that glorious victory,
Which gave to thee the sceptre of the world.
Aug. Augustus scorns not, blushes not to feel
The laurels wreath'd upon his brow by thee;
The giver makes the gift more grateful to me.
If e'er should come the day when quench'd by me
Shall be the fatal torch of civil discord,
And Rome at length takes pity on herself,
And, by her woes made wise, no longer turns
Against herself, her anger, and her arms,
I shall be happy: in the lap of peace,
'Twill easy be the Senate to destroy,
And quiet all the cries of the vile people,
Which still in Rome is daring, and withholds
Obedience blind from him who is its ruler.
If I may hope for this from friendly fate,
Happy the day in which, when at thy feet
My hands have placed a sceptre of such worth,
I may believe that thou wilt not disdain
So sweet a burden to divide with me!
Augustus never reach'd a nobler goal,
Since he has fought in the hard toils of Mars.—
But far away from me, alas, are still
Those happy times: not yet extinct the foes
Either of Rome or of Augustus' self;
And they're sufficient to disturb my peace.
Conquer'd is Antony, a fugitive,
And weak; but he still lives; and in his breast
Preserves a cruel hate, fierce enmity
Against me: but Augustus is more gen'rous,
Greater and more magnanimous; he ne'er
His triumph's lustre will obscure; his heart
Is closed to vengeance: vengeance is unworthy.—
I pity much thy cruel destiny,
If thou must be the slave of its wild passions:

Perchance is Antony no lover true
Of thee, as thou dost think; and thou, O queen,
Wilt one day weep for having loved him so.
Cleo. Too much I loved ungrateful Antony;
No more I love him; to amend my fault
I'm now prepared: it is not hate or vengeance
Which urges me to-day my fault to cancel,
But reason, the cool reason of a monarch.
For a long time his death has seem'd to be
Not only useful for this kingdom, long
By him despoil'd, but indispensable;
And now that his existence might once more
Re-open all the ancient wounds of Rome,
Destroy the peace of the whole world, and partly
Rob thee of thy supreme felicity,
'Twould be a crime to have compassion on him.
Aug. It is too true that there are times when pity
Is in the heart of kings no virtue.
Cleo. Thou
Hast said enough, Augustus: spent is all
My pity . . . How could heav'n give thee such power
Of ruling souls with such sweet mastery?
How in my soul canst thou at pleasure wake
All my affections, or extinguish them?—
Thou art the living image of great Cæsar;
In thee the same deportment proud I see,
And, at a younger age, the self-same laurels
Around thy brow, and in thy bosom's heavings
I also see again his soul divine.—
Once I loved Cæsar, ne'er did I disdain him:
Wherefore, my lord, did I not know thee sooner?
For I should never to less glorious flames
Have granted then an entrance to my bosom:
Augustus, I of thee had been more worthy!
Aug. Cæsar did love thee, truly; but who e'er
Saw thee and loved thee not? Augustus only
By thy mere fame had lost his heart to thee,
Before he saw thee. When I took up arms
And was enraged 'gainst Antony, in him
I saw not a mere rival to the throne
And glory, but an odious rival too;

'Twas not alone the world that was the prize
Of victory; more precious in my eyes,
More glorious, Cleopatra, was thy heart.
But Antony draws nigh; we must dissemble.
Cleo. Know nothing of his fate, until accomplish'd!

Scene III.

ANTONY, AUGUSTUS, CLEOPATRA.

Ant. What see I, Heav'ns! is't true? O Cleopatra,
Thou here with my detested enemy?
O cruel jealousy, revenge, and fury,
If ye suffice to rob me of my reason,
Why do ye also not suffice to guide
My desp'rate hand e'en to the inmost heart
Of both the traitors?
Cleo. Antony, and when
Wilt thou restrain these odious doubts of thine,
These cruel insults?
Ant. When the greedy Fates
Shall have a cruel death on me imposed.
Aug. What madness wild obscures thy senses now?
Why shouldst thou deem me weak, and cruel too?
Thou art deceived, nor thinkest, Antony,
That thy fierce wrath awakes no wrath in me,
But rather wakens pity in my breast.
Ant. From out thy heart all pity banish now:
If false, it angers me; if true, degrades me;
Whate'er it be, from thee it must offend me.
Nought from Augustus I expect, nought ask;
All that he could, he robb'd me of; I still
Possess one good, which ever scoffs at tyrants:
That is a Roman soul, which ne'er succumbs
Unto misfortune, but becomes more proud,
And so much native haughtiness preserves,
That, vanquish'd, it can even shame the victor.
It was the hand of an unwarlike woman
Which took from me, and gave to thee the empire;
I know not which of us should blush the most.
Thou, Cleopatra, now preferr'st Augustus,
And thou art right, because thy soul is worthy

Augustus' soul: in baseness they are equal,
And fashion'd of the selfsame quality;
Hell was their maker, to my prejudice.
My lofty heart has form'd too great a contrast
With your hearts' vileness: go your way exulting
In your stol'n triumph, and forget that ye
By fraud alone obtain'd it, and by horrors:
Arms worthy of a tyrant and a woman;
Used by the base, to Antony unknown.

Aug. But base mistrust, and low and vile suspicion
Are also arms that tyrants love to use:
Surely great Antony should scorn to-day
To hug them to his bosom. To Augustus
Mistrust remains unknown, and he has never
Excited it within the hearts of others.
Guilty is Cleopatra, but unhappy:
Yes, ev'ry thing in her reveals the blows
Of hostile fate; she more unhappy seems
To me than guilty. Seated on the throne
With thee, and both inflamed with love insane,
She stood apart one day from thy great splendor:
Still more imprudent, since thou wert more great,
Thou also from her errors stood'st apart.
I pity Antony, and at my cost
Would see him happy. And the queen as well
I fain would extricate from that sad fate,
Which in the future is for her prepared:
But that, I cannot.

Ant. Thou, Augustus, must!
Thou ought'st, and wilt, if thou dost value honor.
That haughty present which thou offer'st me
Of half the world, I never can accept:
That world surrender I, and only ask thee
To save the' ancestral throne of Cleopatra,
And let her children reign in Egypt here.
For me, I only ask for so much earth
As may suffice to cover the small urn
In which my ashes shortly will repose.

Cleo. What say'st thou, Antony? what cruel thoughts
Dost thou reserve for me and for thyself?
What doest thou, my lord? take back the throne,

And life and honor: for to me these gifts
Than death itself more bitter are and cruel,
If 'tis not granted me with thee to' enjoy them.
How can I sit alone on that sad throne
Which held us both, and which thou now dost scorn?
How can I live, when to a desp'rate death
Thy barbarous fury is conducting thee?
A living corpse has never yet been seen;
Such shall I be, deprived of Antony.
It must not be! Let the exclusive glory
Of keeping him alive be thine, Augustus:
Spite of himself, yes, save him, make him live.
If 'tis my death the faithless one demands,
'Gainst me let him divert his wrath and fury,
And on my body let him wreak his will;
If he would have me live, scorn'd by the world,
And bound in Rome to thy triumphal car,
Let him live, reign . . ., and to the car I'll fly.
I ask'd thee naught, Augustus, whilst I only
In danger found myself: I owe it now
To Antony, myself, and all the world,
To have no other destiny than his!
Do thou confound us both, then, with thy virtue;
Lofty revenge to lofty hearts is granted:
Spare Cleopatra, Antony to spare.
From him divided, I have no more life:
Too much doth he, too, life from me receive.
Thou'rt touch'd, Augustus: do not turn away
Thy humid eyes; ah no, conceal not thou
The marks divine of a forgiving heart:
Hear it alone; 'tis generous, and great,
And far more eloquent than all my words:
Triumph or death 'twill grant me at thy feet.

Ant. Dost seek to humble me? forgettest thou
That 'tis for Antony thou pray'st? that all
The world would not repay me for such baseness?

Aug. Arduous in truth, but glorious the attempt
Has ever been to subjugate oneself.
Though, to my loss, it may be mine to gain
Over my heart so great a victory,
Far greater therefore will the honor be.

It shall be known some day, in future ages,
That on one day the world Augustus conquer'd,
And the world's conqueror. Live, then, fair queen,
And reign, and share thy life and throne as well,
If thou canst happy be, with thy old lover.
In yonder temple we will call as witness
The deities, the Romans, and the world,
To our not doubtful peace; there let us swear
Lasting oblivion to our former hatred.
Let Antony be greater than my gift;
Let him accept it, be the donor's equal.
How to gain empires, common heroes know;
Augustus, Antony alone know how to scorn them.

Scene IV.

CLEOPATRA, ANTONY.

Ant. O queen, what was't that urged thee on? was't love,
Hate, or contempt? It surely was not love.
A throne, that is the price of villainy,
Would cover me with horror, shame, contempt.
Each thought have I averted from the throne,
And gaze on death with an intrepid eye.
May heav'n belie my sad prognostications;
But, if I err not, death will some day be
The only cure for thy extreme misfortunes.
Sincere is not Augustus, as thou deem'st him;
No hero is he; and he knows not how
To feign a hero's words. Go to the temple:
There in the face of men and gods, O queen,
If it so please thee, take thy place and blush:
I the first victim am, who ought to make
The deities propitious; and my blood
May be sufficient for Augustus' fury . . .
Woman, mayst thou enjoy a happier fate,
Than that for thee predicted by my heart.

Cleo. Like thee, despise I death, and death in truth
Will be my cure, if cheated by Augustus.
If it be needed, who can then forbid it?
But if thou lov'st me still, if true the words

Augustus spoke, what need is there to die?
'Tis known to all that, from thy earliest years,
Thou hast been wont, not pardon to implore,
But to accord it: gather now the fruits
Of pardon, and let all the shame be mine.
What could it be, if not the pangs of love,
Which moved me then to condescend to prayers?
If 'twas not love, the conqueror would ne'er
Have seen me asking mercy; from the conquer'd
A sword alone should I demand, and death.

Ant. Thou bidd'st me live, and take the wicked gift:
I ought not; but my duty oftentimes
Has at thy bidding been compell'd to change.
I'll to the temple go, to ask the gods
To teach me how to recognize the wicked.

Scene V.

CLEOPATRA.

Cleo. Credulous lover, go not to the temple;
Go rather to an unexpected death . . .
Yes, find thou death, and heinous treachery,
There where thou look'st for life, for love and peace . . .
But, what? remorse again? thou base remorse,
Go far away from me . . . and seek to frighten
Hearts that are weak and proud; in me be silent . . .
Shall I abandon thee, my throne, just when
My foot is raised to climb thee once again?
It shall not be: then perish, Antony:
Perish the world, before I will desert thee!
What arm shall I employ? . . . Lo, Diomedes!

Scene VI.

CLEOPATRA, DIOMEDES.

Cleo. Heav'n sends thee, Diomedes; minister
'Twould make thee of its wrath: yes, Antony
To-day must die: honor will have it so,
My glory which has been betray'd, the peace,
The splendor, the security of Egypt.
No hand more faithful or more bold than thine

Do I possess. Soon Antony will pass
By yon dark path, conducting from the palace
Unto the temple; there 'tis he must fall.
Behold the steel; and thou must let him see it,
And know that that same hand which once he loved
Placed it to-day in thine, that thou mightst kill him;
And let him also know that not in vain
A queen and woman is insulted. He
Would fain, by peace, make me Augustus' slave:
By me shall perish the ungrateful traitor.
Go, speak not, but obey, nor let the blackness
Deter thee of the blow. When thou art serving
Thy queen, there is no crime in what thou doest;
But all is honor. What! dost hesitate?
Fly, as my fury's rapid messenger,
Or thou shalt fall as victim on this spot.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CLEOPATRA, ISMENE, DIOMEDES.

Cleo. Hast thou avenged me? lives he now no more?
Diom. Yes, queen, I with one single fatal blow
Robb'd Antony of life, myself of honor.
Cleo. And when he heard my name, what said he then?
Diom. O Heav'ns! and wouldst thou by fresh horrors swell
The crime I have committed? must I tell thee
That which dark night and black Avernus ought
To cover with oblivion never-ending?
I cannot do so, no; at the foul stroke
I turn'd away my eyes, my blood stood frozen
Around my heart, and then my spirit, mute
And stupefied with horror, nothing knew
Of that black, wicked, and accursèd blow
Struck by my impious hand, rebellious to it:
A blow by which my life henceforth will be
Made bitter and unhappy; and a blow

Perchance more adverse than thou now dost think
To thee, thy peace, thine honor, and thy kingdom.
Cleo. Meanwhile must I permitted be to taste
The greatly long'd-for fruits of my revenge:
How sweet are they to an embitter'd heart!
The odious rugged chains of Antony
At length are broken; in my breast once more
Re-awaken'd are both hope and joy, long banish'd
By a severe and mournful tyranny.
But see, Augustus comes! How sweet to him
The bitter news will be, to me how useful!

Scene II.

AUGUSTUS, CLEOPATRA, ISMENE, DIOMEDES.

Cleo. By thee, my lord, my passions have been conquer'd:
Remorse and pity both have silenced been;
And, at one blow, destroy'd by me the foes
To-day have been of Rome and of Augustus:
No more lives Antony; a mighty impulse
Drove me . . . But what? . . . thou turn'st away thy looks
All grim, astonish'd, fix'd upon the ground?
Confused, and sad and frozen, hearest thou
My words, when they thy bosom should have flooded
With nought but joy? . . . What is the cause? . . .
Aug. O queen,
Less noble should I be, did I not mourn
The lamentable death of an unhappy
And yet great hero. Ah! yes, Antony,
That mighty warrior, though my enemy,
Was worthy of a far more noble end.
Cleo. What unaccustom'd speech in thee is this?
Before he fell, thou never call'dst him great:
What living thou didst hate, dost mourn when dead?
How can thy soul for ever fluctuate
Between a spurious virtue and true vice?
Thou dost pretend to be a glorious hero,
But nature fashion'd thee a tyrant vile:
Beneath feign'd grief thou hid'st thyself in vain.—
Aug. My enemy, my hated enemy

Was Antony, but he was still a Roman;
To rid him of his enemies, Augustus
Has never sought a woman's coward hand;
He never has debased himself so low:
All treachery I scorn; to treachery
The kings of Egypt are too much accustom'd.

Cleo. Yes, tear away the veil; the wicked mind
Of a most wicked mortal is beneath.
Thy flatt'ry vile, and thy mendacious words,
Of which, save heav'n, there was no other witness,
Days of eternal grief for me have woven . . .
Thee, heav'n, invoke I not; of such misdeeds
Thou art not conscious, or didst turn away
Thine eyes in scorn, that thou mightst see them not:
If 'tis not so, for whom dost thou reserve
Those thunderbolts which impious men despise?

Aug. Do not profane the sacred name of heaven
With lips impure: 'twas ever deaf to crime.
Meanwhile prepare to follow me to Rome;
Also prepare to render an account
Of thy atrocious guilt; let no vain hope
Inspire thee, that unpunish'd shall remain
The bitter death of such a noble Roman.

Scene III.

CLEOPATRA, DIOMEDES, ISMENE.

Cleo. O cruel pain! anguish before unknown!
With rage and fury dumb, see I myself
Oppress'd and scorn'd, and must I fret in vain?
Ye horrid serpents, which entwine around
The Gorgon's head, your sight would be to me
More pleasant far than the atrocious sight
Of him, who greater monster is than ye . . .
I am betray'd, . . . but with the self-same arms
With which I hapless Antony betray'd.
What, thoughtless one, hast done? . . . O Antony! . . .
O thou repentance, baser than my crime!
Thou art not child of virtue or of pity,
But of defenceless rage, delusive, vile.
And thou remorse, which I so long repress'd,

Dost thou now rise to wreak thy vengeance on me,
A cruel vengeance for my late contempt?
But 'tis not time to listen to thee now;
In vain my lamentations and my tears,
And all too late. At times to wipe out crimes
Becomes it needful fresh ones to commit.
O fool, what said I? was it e'er a crime
The wicked to chastise? Augustus must
Perish like Antony: his just death vow I
Unto the gods, an unjust death atoning.
All of his faithless blood shall now be shed,
And on the very tomb of Antony; . . .
And thus his shade betray'd shall be appeased.

Diom. More needed, and less dreadful than the first,
But far too difficult is such a crime.
Some one approaches.

Cleo. Antony! great gods!
Open, thou earth! Where hide myself? thou liar,
Unworthy one, couldst thou betray me thus?

Diom. Not to betray my honor, I betray'd
A monarch, who imposed on me misdeeds.

Scene IV.

ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, DIOMEDES, ISMENE.

Ant. This steel behold! 'Tis, Cleopatra, thine.
Sharpen'd to-day on thy cold heart of stone,
Of temper barbarous, on murder bent,
By thee 'twas destined to transfix my breast.
But thou didst wrong to trust it to another,
Not to thyself; a work so great was worthy
Of a fierce soul, one utterly debased,
Like thine. The goodness of the deities
Is niggard of such souls as thine 'mongst mortals . . .
This steel doth tell enough and far too much
To me of thee, and thy ferocious thoughts;
And all those words of love which, cruel woman,
Thou once didst frame upon thy perjured lips,
Have by thy dagger been to-day belied.—
O wicked steel, in thee I read too well
The perfidy, the guilt of faithless woman,

And a weak lover's cruel destiny!
Yes! all the bitter mournful history
Of my unhappy love, I clearly trace
Sculptured in thee, in characters of blood;
But, horrible and cruel though it be,
It frightens not the soul of Antony . . .
Woman, the final limits of thy fury
I fain would know; thou dost surpass by far
My feeble thoughts, in hatred all unskill'd:
My mind has shown itself by far more slow
Iniquity and fraud to comprehend,
Than thine has been to put them into practice.
Since thou hast gone so far, I will not harbor
The haughty anger or the fury wild
Of an offended lover; nor would I
Have done so, hadst thou always been a traitor,
My life alone attempting, not my honor.
I will not ask of thee, with harsh reproaches,
Redress for having outraged thus my faith:
Great baseness would be mine for acting thus,
Nor in thy heart would shame or blushes waken.
The height of villainy hast thou attain'd;
I see no sign in thee of agitation.—
Medea, when detected, was abash'd;
And e'en in Hell Megæra and Alecto
Were seen to be confused in face, and blush:
Thou only, woman, coldly terrible,
Dost grimly fix thine eyes upon thy crimes,
Repenting only that thy treason base
Is not completed.

Cleo. Yes! 'tis true, I feel
Nor pity nor remorse; 'tis wrath alone
I harbor in my breast. I've nought to say,
Save that I was the cruellest of women
That, in its angry fierceness, hostile heaven
Ever created to chastise the world:
Perfidious, yes; but not so wise as might be.
At length I'm conquer'd by the very treasons,
Which gave to me the palm: more wicked still,
Baser than I, rejoices now Augustus:
'Twere vain to weep.—Too feeble are all words

The bitter, awful matter to explain;—
Give me the steel again; 'twill speak more proudly.
Ant. Shortly I'll give it back: and thou shalt see
The victor blush, in presence of the vanquish'd.

Scene V.

AUGUSTUS, SEPTIMIUS, CLEOPATRA, ISMENE, ANTONY, DIOMEDES.

Aug. The queen deceived me, or herself was fool'd.
Ant. Come now, thou arrogant proud conqueror,
Come to collect the fruits of thy great valor;
Worthy of thee alone thy triumph is.
I shall not live, but for a few short moments,
Enough to serve to publish to the world
The heart of Antony, Augustus' baseness.
'Tis true that Fate, rebellious on that day
To virtue, gave the victory to thee,
But not the Roman soul to bear it well.
By war's vicissitudes, to me unlucky,
Thou'rt placed upon the top of fortune's wheel;
That kindly deity, who always smiles
On prosp'rous tyrants, to the thoughtless crowd
May hold thee up as generous and pious . . .
Less partial than is Fate, and more propitious,
Which of us is the hero, Death shall say.
Death base and infamous thou didst prepare me;
As a last gift, a kindlier heav'n accords it
Both free, and worthy, and invincible.
No, death affrights me not with all its horrors;
Oft have I seen it, and not turn'd my eyes;
I to despise it ever train'd my soul;
Me it oft fled, but never saw me fly;
Now I confront it. O sweet death! O dear one!
Now that thou sav'st me from a slav'ry base,
Art thou not first of goods? the only good?
Since thou obscur'st not my ancestral annals,
And that great land, in heroes fertile, which
My country was, but will not be my tomb,
Dost cancel not each fault in life committed?
Ah, yes! to him who scorns and loves thee, thou

Giv'st back lost virtue and his pristine honor . . .
What are ye, honor . . . virtue . . . glory, valor?
Deceitful shadows, which were framed by pride
Amongst us mortals: all in vain collect ye
Round death, which, tearing ev'ry veil aside,
Doth banish, scatter, and destroy you all . . .
Fly, fly, O queen, the horrors of a triumph,
Horrors far worse than those of any death.
Wherefore alone to die is granted to us?
I could have given thee yet more of life . . .
Augustus, now will the whole world be thine:
Since I have taught thee not how thou shouldst reign;
If thou, like me, shouldst be unfortunate,
Learn to die bravely, as does Antony.[1]

Diom. Brave warrior! Heav'n was jealous of thy presence
On this ungrateful earth.[2]

Aug. Now let the queen
Be dragg'd away from hence by force, if prayers
Are not sufficient . . .

Cleo. Stop, thou barb'rous one!
Thou fain wouldst tie me to thy car in Rome?
At least permit me to delight my eyes
In horrors and in blood, yes, e'en in death;
That I may lose my senses, and extract
Fresh fury from them . . . But since heav'n is slow
The wicked to chastise, and I'm unable
To pierce thy breast, I pierce my own instead.[3]

Aug. Heav'ns, Cleopatra! . . .

Cleo. I . . . unworthy was
Of life . . . but, if to thee the curses now
By wicked rage invoked can fatal be,
Then horror, and deceit, and treachery
Will close pursue thee, and at last thou'lt find
The horrid death which is a tyrant's due . . .
Furies . . . infernal Furies . . . come ye now? . . .
I follow you . . . ah! . . . with thy viper's torch,
Thou discord black, thou fain wouldst light my way.
Give it to me . . . in dying I perchance

[1] Kills himself. [2] Antony is taken off the stage.
[3] Stabs herself.

Might set the world on fire, and so dissolve it . . .
Dost cry for vengeance, Antony? . . . 'tis blood . . .
But faithless blood . . . O horror . . . ruin . . . death . . .[1]
Aug. O Romans, let us go; in this vile land
All breathes of terror, making heav'n impure;
The very air with ev'ry vice is tainted.

[1] Dies.

XXI.

ABEL.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE characters in this very singular play are divided into two classes—one comprising the first four denizens of the earth after the Creation, Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel: and the other consisting of supernatural Beings, including The Almighty, personified as The Voice of God; Lucifer, with his chief retainers Beëlzebub, Mammon, and Ashtaroth; Sin, Envy, and Death; and Choruses of Angels and Demons. The whole of the speeches of these supernatural Beings are in rhyme, and contain a great variety of versification, which I have closely followed. They are supposed to be sung. The human beings, on the other hand, all speak in blank verse, and use the ordinary heroic metre. One short prayer of Adam and his family in Act II., and another of Adam in Act III. are an exception to this rule, being in rhyme. Of the total number of verses in this play (1557) as many as 680 are in rhyme.

The play opens in Hell, where Sin recounts to his father Lucifer his ineffectual attempts to gain admission to the happy family of Adam, who has become entirely reconciled to, and pardoned by, God, after the Fall. Lucifer determines to summon a council of his adherents, to determine on the means of insuring man's destruction. Accordingly Ashtaroth, Beëlzebub, and Mammon successively appear, with a vast crowd of minor demons, &c., and Lucifer tells them for what purpose he has assembled them, and calls upon Sin to explain what he saw passing on earth. Sin accordingly describes the perfect happiness which prevails

in the family of Adam, and the failure of his attempts to destroy it. Beëlzebub first speaks, and tells Lucifer that he did wrong in leaving earth directly after he had produced the fall, by inducing Eve to taste the apple, and that his son Sin alone was inadequate to take his place. He ought to have been accompanied by legions of demons, or by some great plague. Mammon suggests that Envy would be the proper person to send, she having been the cause of the ruin of the rebel angels. In accordance with his suggestion Envy is sent for and appears on the scene, attended by her dreadful snakes. Ashtaroth advises that Death, the deaf daughter of Lucifer, should accompany Envy in her mission—a proposal which is received with universal acclamation, and Death with her scythe and glass also enters. Lucifer instructs Envy to put on a youthful appearance, and Death to take the form of a matron, as her mother; and informs the assembly that he intends to go with them to earth, accompanied by Sin. The Chorus interposes its remarks all through this Act (which will remind the reader in many respects of the conference in Pandemonium of Satan and the rebel Angels, in the first and second Books of *Paradise Lost*).

Act II. shows Adam and Eve discoursing, after his day's labor is over. It might be seen from her language that Abel is Eve's favorite son, and she speaks of an inexplicable mark on Cain's forehead. But both parents show how deeply they love them both. Their sons join them, and explain their being late by one of Abel's favorite lambs having strayed, and Cain having recovered it with difficulty. The tenderness of Abel's heart is made manifest, and the sterner, yet loving character of Cain, as yet untempted. After joining in prayer to the Almighty, they all partake of their frugal evening meal. A touching scene follows, caused by some words dropped by Adam implying the approach of age and their separation by death; and then they all retire to rest, after Adam has cautioned Eve never to let their sons know the story of the Fall and their lost happiness.

The third Act shows the four mortals all sleeping, and Lucifer with his companions and chorus of demons watching them. Envy chooses Cain as her prey, Death chooses

Abel. The former sends one of her snakes to twine round Cain's heart. The evil spirits depart, and Cain awakes before it is light, having been disturbed by evil dreams. He complains to himself of having the hardest work to do, and of Abel being their parents' favorite. He experiences strange, novel sensations, and finally determines to go forth into the world, away from home, accompanied only by his pickaxe. Lucifer and Envy, who have been hovering near, appear, and Lucifer orders the latter to follow Cain, and hides himself in a cloud. The parents then awake, and find that Cain has departed, without their usual blessing. They rouse Abel, who recounts to them a dreadful dream which he has just had. Eve points out a strange black cloud in their cottage, resembling, she says, one which she saw on the day of her temptation. Abel then departs to find his brother, the cloud disappears, and Adam and Eve describe to each other their apprehensions of impending misfortune. Adam offers up humble prayers to Heaven, and is answered by the Voice of God, and by a chorus of invisible Angels. He and Eve then start to look for their two children.

Abel is seen at the beginning of the fourth Act on an open plain, searching for Cain. Lucifer misleads him by imitating Cain's voice, and he hastens on, hoping at any rate to overtake his brother at a great distant river, of which they had heard their father speak. Death and Envy, in their disguise as mother and daughter, now appear in search of their respective preys. Cain enters, and, after regretting having run away, is about to return to his parents, when he is astonished at seeing two human beings approaching him, dressed like Eve. Envy addresses him in mysterious verses, which awaken his curiosity, and presently depicts to him the happiness of the land where she dwells beyond the great river, and to which she invites him. She also artfully irritates him against his parents and Abel, accusing the former of keeping him in ignorance of the happiness destined for him, in order that they may reserve it for Abel instead, as only one mortal can enjoy it. To complete Cain's enchantment, Envy summons choruses of dancers and singers to appear, who enthral him with their melodies

and dances, and disappear as instantaneously as they arrived. Envy touches Cain's hand and also disappears with her mother. Cain, in wild excitement, is just rushing off to reach the promised happy land before Abel, when the latter appears, in his search for Cain, also hastening towards the river. Cain turns against him wrathfully with his pickaxe, and Abel flies.

Cain has overtaken Abel at the fifth Act, and drags him back, overwhelming him with reproaches, the meaning of which Abel cannot understand. At one moment Cain's better feelings get the upper hand, and he listens to Abel's entreaties for mercy. Finally the evil spirit's influence prevails, and he strikes down his brother with his axe. No sooner has he done so, than he repents and flies. Adam enters and hears Abel's dying story. Just as he expires, Eve appears. Adam endeavors to prevent her from seeing the dead body, but she soon discovers the truth. They lament together, and Adam curses Cain. The Voice of God is heard, telling them to dry up their tears, and turn all their thoughts to Heaven.

In a long Preface to this remarkable tragedy, dated 25th April, 1796, Alfieri gives a curious account of the reasons which induced him to call it by the strange name of "Tramelogedy," indicating his little appreciation of Classical Etymology. He says that *Abel* is neither a tragedy, a comedy, a drama, a tragi-comedy, nor a Greek tragedy, which last would, he thinks, be correctly described as melo-tragedy. "Opera-tragedy" would, in his opinion, be a fitting name for it, but he prefers interpolating the word "melo" into the middle of the word "tragedy," so as not to spoil the ending, although by so doing he has cut in two (as he acknowledges) the root of the word—τραγος.

The original title of this play was *Cain, a musical Tragedy*. But Alfieri was extremely proud of his newly-invented word, and hoped that he was introducing in this and other similar dramas once contemplated by him, a new style of writing destined to effect a revolution in Italian art, Opera in itself tending to enervate and degrade

the mind, whilst Tragedy elevates, enlarges, and confirms it. "May, then, tramelogedy prepare, in part, this necessary and precious change, by which the Italians, mounting from their most effeminate Opera to virile Tragedy, may at the same time raise themselves from the nullity of their politics to the dignity of a real Nation."

Sismondi thinks that the allegory of *Abel* is fatiguing on the stage, and that the versification of Alfieri does not possess the loftiness and fascination requisite to adapt it to music. Few readers, however, will deny the interest of the work.

ABEL.

A TRAMELOGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PHANTASTIC PERSONAGES.	TRAGIC PERSONAGES.
THE VOICE OF GOD.	ADAM.
LUCIFER.	EVE.
BEËLZEBUB.	CAIN.
MAMMON.	ABEL.
ASHTAROTH.	
SIN.	
ENVY.	
DEATH.	
Chorus of Angels.	
Chorus of Demons.	

N.B. The Phantastic Personages, all of whose verses are lyrical and in rhyme, always sing them as recitatives or airs.

The Tragic Personages recite in blank verse and give their lyrics in recitative.

SCENE.—*Different in nearly every Act.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Kingdom of Lucifer.

LUCIFER, SIN.

Sin. Great monarch of the realms of pain,
The dark abyss I enter once again,
After a sojourn of full many a day
Upon that earth where man is now residing,
Scorning our sway,
And all the powers of hell deriding.
Lucif. Dear son, thou knowest well that no excuse
In this eternal exile is of use.

Recount thy deeds, that I may tell
The story to the gods of Hell.
Hast thou not carried out my plan?
And that vile clay, which in those realms as Man
Is known, does crime not yet debase it?
Does innocence continue still to grace it?
Sin. Thither, where now the sun shines bright,
I vainly, father, wing'd my flight,
To do thy bidding: but 'tis vain
At present there to hope to reign.
Man ridicules the might of Hell,
And laughs to scorn thy pow'r as well;
And I, in sorrow and disgrace,
Left Earth, where God denied to me a place;
Despairing, I re-enter the dark pit,
Where everlasting shades of darkness sit.
Lucif. Perverse one, how didst thou perform thy part?
What force didst thou employ, what wiles, what art?
What threats, what arms were used by thee
Against the feeble frame
Of man, for born of flesh is he,
And made for sin and shame?
Four only tread as yet earth's face,
Precursors of the human race.
Upon the two first parents I
Brought trouble by my presence easily.
Two sons besides now breathe, and yet withal
Thou hast not pow'r to make them criminal? . . .
Sin. They're all as yet too much in God united.
Though He, by righteous wrath incited,
From Eden's garden Adam banish'd,
His tender mercy has not vanish'd;
His sov'reign hand protects them still,
Nor leaves them prisoners to their own vain will.
Beside each man doth a wing'd angel stand,
Sent by the' Eternal Maker, in his hand
Waving and flashing through the air
A dazzling, naked brand of temper rare:
And we, the messengers of Hell, pierced thro'
By the strange might of those transcendent rays,
Afar off stand, in trembling wonder gaze,
And nothing more can do.

These base slaves of the sov'reign will of God,
Thro' fear alone obedient to His nod,
And constant foes to us,—who slav'ry love,
And pleasure in our sorrows prove,—
They glory in the duty hard
Of keeping constant watch and guard
Over that man, himself so small,
Who for an apple's glitter once lost all.
Lucif. Madness! what hear I? from our seats in heaven
Doth it our victors not suffice to know
That we by them were forced, and crush'd, and driven
Down to these mute and gloomy realms below?
And now, to make us feel still more accurst,
They fain would man deliver,—
Man whom my cunning taught to reason first,
And keep him from our wiles for ever!
Quick, to the rescue! Let the trumpet sound,
The mighty ringing trumpet, all around,
And gather all my children proud
In one gigantic darksome crowd!
Ha, ha! In this vast tomb each cave and rock
Resounds already with the awful shock.—
Tell them the dangers thou hast had to face;
Describe man's dwelling and condition;
That we at once may seek the place,
And man, base man, no more withhold submission.

Scene II.

LUCIFER, SIN, CHORUS OF DEMONS.

Chorus.

To council, to council betake ye,
Ye terrible warriors of might!
From your lethargy, quick, quick, awake ye,
Ye angels of night!
Come, and the mighty voice obey
Of your all-pow'rful king,
Which, echoing,
Hath gather'd all this wondrous crowd to-day!

A voice.

Ye, who are grov'lling in the lake of blood,
And find in it your food;
Ye, who in pitch are doom'd to lie,
In brimstone boiling fearfully;
And ye, whose doom is to dwell
'Midst the barking and howling
And roaring and growling
Of all the fierce monsters of hell;

Chorus.

Come, and the mighty voice obey
Of your all-pow'rful king,
Which, echoing,
Hath gather'd all this wondrous crowd to-day!

Another voice.

See where tremendous Ashtaroth appears!
High above all his giant form he rears;
Beneath his feet the palace quakes,
Still darker our dark night he makes.[1]

Chorus.

To council, to council betake ye,
Ye terrible warriors of might!

Another voice.

Why does a sudden silence fall
On those who in front have gone?
They reverently, one and all,
Make way for one walking alone!
Beëlzebub I see, our second king,
A fiery weapon brandishing.

Chorus.

From your lethargy, quick, quick, awake ye,
Ye angels of night!

[1] This embodiment of Ashtaroth as a male spirit is not in accordance with our English ideas. See *Paradise Lost*, Book I., line 422, &c.

Another voice.

But, who draws nigh, all cover'd with gold
And gems so splendid,
By so many attended?
Hail, Mammon, so niggard with treasures untold!
Soon frail mortals before thee
Will fall, and adore thee,
And thine unerring bow
Will lay them low.

Chorus.

Come, and the mighty voice obey
Of your all-pow'rful king,
Which, echoing,
Hath gather'd all this wondrous crowd to-day!

Another voice.

So vast the throng, this regal hall
Sufficeth not to hold them all:
But see how Lucifer his sceptre lifteth,
And backward ev'ry wall around him shifteth![1]
The signal ceaseth; and the circle stands
Obedient to our king's commands.

Chorus.

Now the great council is collected;
Eager to know the cause,
They all with rev'rence pause,
Their eyes on Lucifer directed.

[1] Author's Note:—"This idea is taken from Milton. An ingenious machinist may amuse himself by carrying it out: as may a skilful composer, by imitating with musical sounds the slow retrogression of the scenes."

Scene III.

LUCIFER, ASHTAROTH, BEËLZEBUB, MÀMMON, SIN, SILENT DEMONS, CHORUS.

Lucifer.

Ye gods of Hell, give ear to what I say,
Whilst briefly making weighty matters known;
Things in my heart conceal'd for many a day,
Leaving me sad on my Tartarean throne.
I'll tell not how we, brave, became the prey,
And Heav'n for cowards was reserved alone:
I'll now unveil the acts, more cruel still,
Of the unjust divine Creator's will.

That biped animal, first made on earth
Of wretched clay, and lord of it to be
Destined forsooth e'en from his very birth;
(Though the Creator, as it seems to me
Already deems His work of little worth)
This animal, to our indignity,
Not only now on earth finds happiness,
But into Heav'n e'en hopes to gain access.

And God consents; and this proud aspiration
For doing good sufficeth as his spur;
Whilst nought but dread of taking up his station
In our lost ranks, forbiddeth him to err.
To tear him from this hateful elevation
Is needful; we must change his character.
To hold the lowest place in hell would be
Small punishment for his perversity.

There leaving this my first and best loved son
To show my might, when my great enterprise,
In giving my advice to Eve, was done,
And I had doff'd my scaly snake's disguise,
He plied each art of ours, omitting none,—
But all my pow'r a greater pow'r defies:
Man pure remains, behind the ceaseless guard
Of the celestial angels, keeping ward.

And that ye all with greater certainty
This vile worm's scorn for us may hear narrated;
That Hell no longer may defrauded be
Of that fair prey, for which she long has waited,
List, while he tells you of man's state, how he
With inward heav'nly bliss is penetrated.
That we may plan how to uproot his joy,
Him to his natural pain and crime decoy.

Sin.

Too true, alas! And I will now recite
In mournful tones, whilst gloomily ye hear,
How all his life is spent in pure delight:
Eve wakes as soon as morning's rays appear,
And from the cool leaves bids him also rise,
Her aid in ev'ry task, and solace dear.
With minds at peace, and rested limbs, their eyes
They turn together tow'rd the eastern sky;
And to that God, who all their wants supplies,
Adoring homage pay with ecstasy:
And neither (hear in this God's wondrous grace!)
Feels aught of that which is crime's penalty,
Remorse, which makes its wounds bleed on apace:
They a full pardon for their faults now share;
And then, with a serene and placid face,
For heard, as pure, hath been their ev'ry prayer,
Their sons together to awake they haste;
One single couch contains the brother-pair.
Abel and Cain, their arms together laced
In loving fashion, sleep in gentle rest,
Which hath the labors of the day effaced.
They too, as soon as risen, have address'd
Accepted supplications to the Lord;
Then to their work return, and do their best
To furnish all things for their father's board.

Chorus.

O sight full of madness!
The sweat of the brow
On which these vile ones trade,
And seek not to evade,

To them presents no terror now,
Nor fills their hearts with sadness?

Sin.

The youthful Abel from his sheep-folds leads
His flocks (so white, that he can in them see
Mirror'd his face), and guides to pleasant meads.
But elder Cain his strength turns willingly
To greater hardships and to labors rude;
The earth he breaks, that the good seed may be
There hid, and then bring forth a harvest good:
The pair, with friendly emulation fill'd,
Give to their parents the pure milk and food.
Each helps the other: whilst the hues that gild
His brother's harvest Abel deems most fair:
Cain loves the flocks more than the land he's till'd.
Meanwhile their mother, with industrious care
That all be clad, doth weave the wool so white,
Since innocence's garb no more they wear.
In pruning fruit trees Adam takes delight,
And grafting them; the moss he beautifies,
That clothes the base nooks where they pass the night.
And yet, although in this degrading wise
They spend the livelong day, they ne'er give vent
To sorrow, nor their frugal meal despise;
But offer thanks to God, and are content.

Chorus.

Vile fetid worm!
On the sweat of thy brow
Feed thou! feed thou!
And thus, if thou canst, efface
Thy shame and disgrace!

A voice.

A life so changed
From thy life of yore,
Canst thou bear it, light-hearted?
Dost thou sorrow not sore
For thy bliss now departed?

Chorus.

Struck down to earth, abased,
From that smiling Eden chased
For which thou wert in evil hour created,
Dost groan not? Canst thou raise
Thy face to God, and praise
Him who reduced thee to a state so hated?

Sin.

I tried to gain access on ev'ry side:
Between the parents and the children first,
The consorts next; the brothers then I tried,
Whose youthful breasts in reas'ning were not versed;
But ev'rywhere the Angel's sword of fire
My pow'r defied, and bid me do my worst:
So that, as I no influence could acquire
Over such hearts, a witness stood I there
Of their great joy, inflamed with fruitless ire.
Darts steep'd in flames of wrath, of temper rare,
I shot at Adam's heart; that he might load
Eve with abusive accents of despair,
As being her to whom his fall he owed.
In vain my darts: the Angel pity shed,
His heart with pardon straightway overflow'd.
Then, in the woman's breast I purposèd
Deep wounds to plant, and turn to hate the shame
Of her own fault; Eve forthwith was misled;
When, lo! the Angel to her succor came,
Dispersed the hate, and made her once more prize
That virtue which was Adam's constant aim.
In short, I mingled, in a thousand wise,
The bitter cup of discord, but in vain:
A mighty Pow'r a remedy supplies,
Reviving ev'ry spark of love again.

Chorus.

Hell may indeed once more
By Heav'n defeated be;
But how 'gainst man must we
Conduct a puny war,

And be assured of victory?
Easy his overthrow,
Since man was made for Hell;
Not long shall our base foe
Against our pow'r rebel.
Too great would be our infamy.

Beëlzebub.

O mighty Monarch of the darksome Pit,
Since thou to Council call'st each minister,
The naked truth thou doubtless wilt prefer;
So I without reserve my thoughts submit.

After that into serious error thou
Hadst dragg'd weak woman 'neath the serpent's guise,
For thee so soon to leave her was not wise;
This the complaint doth prove, we're hearing now.

He conquers who endures. If thou didst deem
None of us worthy there to take thy place,
Thy duty 'twas less quickly to retrace
Thy footsteps: thus to me the case doth seem.

But, who was left by thee to wage the fight,
And drag man onward to successive faults?
Sin only; all unfit for such assaults,
When he was not supported by our might.

'Tis true he is thy child by Pride, and so
The germs of all things evil doth contain:
But for that very reason strives in vain
To make man's faults to full perfection grow.

Legions of demons, for the enterprise
All arm'd, thou shouldst have sent, his heart to storm;
Or some great Plague, disguised in other form,
To charm him with deceitful melodies.

Chorus.

Full wise is the discourse
Beëlzebub hath spoken;
By either fraud or force

Be man's resistance broken!
Full wise is the discourse
Beëlzebub hath spoken.

Mammon.

But why to victory,—O gracious Father,
Thy squadrons send, if like results for thee
Labours less hard—suffice to gather?

A livid gem for ever—belongs to Hell,
At sight of which each one of us doth shiver;
Th' eternal breath—of Envy fell.

Let then that dreadful one,—who hurl'd us erst
From Heav'n to flames undying, bear anon
To mortal man—her frost accurst.

She, with her placid face,—and lying smile,
Will make his heart all rotten to the base;
Will make his mind—and breast most vile.

Chorus.

Come forth, thou Envy pallid,
From out thy dwelling squalid!
And Heav'n defying, hasten thou
To earth above, and darken now
The daylight fair.

A voice.

And with thee also take
Each clammy hideous snake,
Whose fearful hisses wake
The trembling air.
Around thy forehead twine them,
And in thy breast enshrine them,
And round thy vest combine them
In order rare.

Chorus.

Come forth, thou Envy pallid,
From out thy dwelling squalid!

Another voice.

With lurid torch leading,
Thy footsteps preceding,
Be Discord there!
Thy thirst to slake,
Gall and blood to take,
Let her beware!

Chorus.

Yes, Heav'n defying, hasten thou
To earth above, and darken now
The daylight fair.

Another voice.

Behold, her frozen breath, around her dealing death,
Shows her to come from her dark home,
And here repair.
Lo, now she draweth nigh, and 'twixt her teeth on high,
A dying serpent holds, in writhing tortuous folds,
Her dainty fare.[1]

Ashtaroth.

Yes, she at whose mere advent I now see
The Council all struck dumb, and trembling look;
She 'tis who up to Earth should order'd be:
For, if I rightly read the Future's book,
She'll never leave the side of man again,
No other palm be anxious to obtain.

She can do more alone than all our legions
By thousands gather'd, clad in armor fell:
By sending her from these Tartarean regions
To act on Earth as bully base for Hell,
A twofold gain to Hades will ensue,
And all man's hopes will be defeated too.

[1] Universal silence. Envy slowly advances, whilst all the Personages and the Chorus hold their peace.

But the deaf second daughter of our king
Should to her sister added be, pale Death:
To man alone her claws will terror bring,
Down here in Hell she only wastes her breath:
On Earth alone should be her feeding place,
She ne'er should slacken in her onward race.

Behind the steps of Envy let her go,
And with pale, skinny, crooked fingers seize
And torture man, who never saw this foe.
Then Earth shall many harvests reap like these;
With human blood she never will be cloy'd,
Till from the very root is she destroy'd.

Chorus.

Death, Death, to open the portal
Of sorrowful Hell,
To Earth proceed, and that vain mortal,
That haughty worm, torment thou well!
His coming fate he little doth heed.
Go now, O Death,—to Earth proceed!

Death.

Who calls me so?
Where am I, where?
Where shall I go?
What sounds fill the air?
What task is decreed?
On what shall I feed?

Chorus.

Death, Death, to open the portal
Of sorrowful Hell,
Go now, O Death,—to Earth proceed!

Death.

Be it so!
With hour-glass and scythe,
And Hydras that writhe,
To Earth I go.—[1]
What sounds fill the air?

[1] A general shout is here raised, interrupting the chant of Death.

Lucifer.

My daughter, that wild noise which seems to thee
So stunning, is my people's loud up-roar;
My will with their opinion doth agree,
Which is to loose thee from thy native shore.
Go then to Earth; let man ne'er pardon'd be
By thee: but the less guilty evermore
Should be thy prey; Envy shall point them out,
Her constant presence shall remove all doubt.

Your innate squalor ye must both disguise,
And cover with an aspect false and fair:
Thou with the snakes, in youthful lively wise
Must feign to be a maid of beauty rare:
Thou with the scythe, beneath a matron's guise
Thy naked bones and foul face hiding there;
Mother and daughter seeming to the view.
I, with my son, will shortly follow you.—

Yes, gods of Hell, I am preparing now
To go to Earth, my dear son by my side.
That I'm a monarch frank, must all allow;
By none be my authority defied:
I might have sent great talkers, I avow,
But who, in doing, would take little pride.
I go, I conquer, I return; soon after,
The ill-behaved shall find small cause for laughter.

Chorus.

Long life, long life to our King!
In him are sense and courage blended;
His people's good he hath ever intended.
Long life, long life to our King!

A voice.

Ye warriors and ye leaders,
Ye swarthy cherubim,
To Hell's hot gate, in solemn state,
Up, follow him!
Him the magnanimous
Monarch of Hell!

Chorus.

Long live the magnanimous
Monarch of Hell!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Adam's Cottage.

ADAM, EVE.

Eve. The sun already nears the western hills,
And yet our two belovèd sons have not
Homeward return'd: what can it mean?
Adam. My sweet
And dearly cherish'd wife and sister too,
Let it not trouble thee! Later than this
We oftentimes before have seen them come.
Thou knowest that our flock each day becomes,
Thanks to the loving-kindness of our God,
More numerous; so that our youthful Abel
No longer finds that he has strength enough
To keep them in; it often is Cain's wont
To leave behind his mattock in the field
Where he was working, helping him to catch
His over-daring lambs. Perchance to-day
Has this occurr'd, and they have not return'd.
Eve. 'Tis that which makes me sad. So feeble is
The constitution of our darling Abel,
That I am ever dreading the great strain
That he each day exerts upon himself.
Adam. What then? Our God 'twas gave him, and our God
Will keep him too. Was not our Cain as feeble
Through all his earlier years? Yet he alone,
Without a brother to assist him then,
Tended the flocks.
Eve. 'Tis true; but in those days
Our flock was not so large as it is now.

Adam. To sum up all, since 'tis His sov'reign will
That over all the world our race should spread,
We, by anticipation, must ensure
With thoughtful care a due supply for all.
Eve. Unhappy I! Why thus remind me, Adam,
That I'm the cause of the laborious, hard,
Long toil thy sons and grandsons must endure
For their subsistence? Never do I place
Inside my mouth the food for us produced
By the hard labor of our Cain, but I
Break into tears and anger with myself.
Adam. Part of myself, than self to me more dear,
Thou knowest that I feel no griefs but thine.
I pray thee, by our love, to give no place
Inside thy bosom to this bitter poison.
God has done naught in vain. If this took place,
It ought to happen thus. Our present being
Gives me no sorrow. Idleness and pleasure,
In our delightful earthly Paradise,
Assail'd us far too much. The lofty hope
There to return hereafter; and the hope
Of earning by our works a Paradise,
Which in our ears the voice of God in thunder
Once sounded forth: yes, this shall be a spur
To praise Him, and a spur to doing good.
Eve. What sweetness, Adam, find I in thy words!
What truth! Thy voice, with kindly ray, clears up
And silences each tempest in my heart.
Though many a cloud presents itself, to shed
Its darkness o'er my mind, one look of thine,
In which the purity of harmless joy
And love is sparkling, drives away each pain.
If thou didst know with how much pleasure I
For thee and for our children labor . . .
Adam. Yes,
Sweet Eve, far more than thou dost think, I notice
Thy constant efforts. That white milk they bring us
Each day to place upon our frugal board,
Is far less white than is thy tender heart.
I ever ask a daughter from the Lord,
Resembling thee, that other daughters may

Be born to make our far descendants happy,
As thou hast made me happy.
Eve. This I covet,
More than thyself: companion of my sex,
Daughter in years, a sister in her love,
She'll be to me, I trust: I also pray
That her mild disposition may resemble
My Abel's sweet and gentle character.
Adam. Mother of Abel rather than of Cain
Thou always show'st thyself: now, why is this?
Eve. 'Twas Abel that I last bore in my arms;
Therefore in me more tenderness he wakes:
But not more love. 'Tis true that, were I not
Mother of both, in Abel there's a something
More innocent and docile, which appeals
More to my heart, than the rough masculine
Harsh look of Cain. But say: does it not seem
To thee that on Cain's forehead is impress'd,
Extending from one eyebrow to the other,
A certain dark inexplicable mark,
Resembling, as it were, a cloud of blood?
Adam. I have a father's eyes: in both, I see
A son: do thou observe them in like manner.
We can to good direct them, with a living
Pattern of virtue. Cain is never slow
In acting well: meanwhile his father watches
O'er him unceasingly. He has arrived
At boiling years, when, like a raging lion,
The untamed spirit roars. Full well do I
Remember in myself the restless flame,
Which at that age pervaded ev'ry vein:
But then was held above my head the hand
Of a far diff'rent Father, the Creator:
My will's his curb; 'twas then the' Almighty's will.
As far as my weak strength allows, I'll do
All that I can to draw him on to right.
Meanwhile do thou, as was thy wont, divide
Between them thy embraces and thy precepts,
As if they were but one.—But here they come.

Scene II.

CAIN, ABEL, ADAM, EVE.

Eve. Wherefore have ye, my sons, delay'd so long?
Why have ye kept us in this state of anguish?
Abel. Dear mother, pardon us; the cause of this
Am I.
Cain. Thou see'st that on my neck I bear
This little lamb.
Abel. It is my favorite.
'Tis always flying: 'tis too quick: to-day
It got involved in such a steep descent,
That down the cliff it went, and down and down . . .
Cain. So that 'twas only with great pain and risk
That one could scramble down to bring it back.
Abel. 'Twas thou didst go; I did not dare.
Cain. 'Tis safe.
Abel. But on this shoulder it is sorely wounded;
Poor little thing! and how it moans!
Cain. Thou'rt worse
Than it: cheer up, and do not grieve, dear Abel!
I'll make for it a plaster warm, composed
Of herbs and milk; 'twill soon be well again.
And then I'll weave for thee a little string
Of osier twigs, that thou mayst hold it in.
It is too saucy: thus thou'lt always have it
Under thine eyes, and with thy favorite
Thou'lt better guard thy other sheep.
Adam. My sons,
Ye make me happy: for to hear those pure
Fraternal accents spreads a joy immense
In my paternal heart. O thou, who takest
Such tender care of thy dear younger brother,
Blessèd be thou! Such care of thee did I
Take in the days when thou too wert a child.
Abel, thy brother in the fields and woods
Thy second father is.
Abel. I deem him such,
And well he knows it. Father, if thou knewest
How much fatigue he undertakes for me,

And for this wanton flock! It grieves my heart
To be compell'd so often to disturb him.

Cain. Be silent! What are we, but only one?
Thou wilt grow up: thy chin will darker be,
Thy arm get stronger; thou wilt then be able
In my hard work to help me; and besides
We shall have other brethren (this we hope,
As father oft has told us), who will tend
The flocks.

Eve. Now, Adam, is our ev'ning meal
All ready for us. Come, my darling sons,
Quick, come! your places take; let us sit down,
As soon as in the name of God your father
Has bless'd the food that He hath given us.

Adam.[1]

O kind celestial Father, who
  Dost see us, though unseen, we pray
That Thou wilt us with favor view,
  And bless our happy meal to-day.
The sun, when first he rises,
  When half his race is run,
And when the dark'ning mountains
  Proclaim the setting sun,
He ever prays and worships Thee,
Without whom he would nothing be.

All Four.

O kind celestial Father, who
  Dost see us, though unseen, we pray
That Thou wilt us with favor view,
  And bless our happy meal to-day.

Adam. Now sit we down and eat; for each of us
Has earn'd his food by having done his work.
Ye young ones certainly must famish'd be,
And more than weary. Therefore, good my wife,
Let them be served the first.

[1] Adam, like a tragic actor and not a singer, should recite these verses with a more pompous intonation than the others, and in musical tones, without however singing.

Eve. To-day I've made,
My dearest sons, a little circular
Cake out of flour and milk, on the live coals
Baked hard: here is a piece of it: I hope
That ye will like it; taste it; it will make you
Quite strong again.
Abel. Delicious! O dear mother,
How sweet and good it is! what is it call'd?
I know it not: thou never told'st us of it.
Cain. Here, brother! thou must eat this other piece.
Eve. No, no; that is not fair: for thou dost labor
Far more than he; thou ought'st to have the most.
Cain. In giving it to him, I take more pleasure
Than eating it myself.
Abel. Thou art too kind.
Mother, shall I accept or not? he gives it;
'Tis so delicious, so . . .
Adam. Let Abel have it:
I in exchange will give to thee, my son,
This pear: 'tis one of those that I myself
Have grafted: take it! what a beauty 'tis!
'Tis almost large enough to fill both hands:
For love of me now eat it.
Cain. O what grateful,
What precious juice! but I must give to Abel
This little quarter of it.
Eve. O, young glutton!
Just see him! always takes he ev'rything.
Abel. I? I obey him always like a father.
Eve. How charming art thou!
Adam. Blessèd be ye both!
Ye are our eyes; some day ye will become
Our faithful props when we attain old age.
Abel. What kind of thing is this old age of yours,
Of which I hear you speak so frequently?
Adam. My son, it is the very opposite
Of that which thou art now. As, day by day,
A something constantly is added on
Unto thy strength, thy beauty, and thy stature,
Unto thy intellect and understanding:
So, day by day, a something of all these

Is constantly decreasing and destroy'd
In us, thy parents.
Abel. But, how happens this?
Ye, who are both so kind, and who both love us
So much, ye surely ought to go on growing
In ev'rything, still more than we do.
Adam. Abel,
Hast thou e'er seen, when first the morning dawn'd,
And when thou from our cottage wentest forth,
Hast thou e'er seen the rose, impregnated
With the nocturnal strength-restoring dew,
Stand swelling and awaiting the sun's rays,
Its leaves to open with their kindly power?
Abel. O yes! full often have I seen it; oft, too,
Have I observed, when coming home at eve,
That it was scorch'd and half burnt up, and drooping;
And on the following day, scarce half remain'd;
And the third day, 'twas gone.
Adam. Thou, then, hast seen,
My son, that which will, after a few years,
To my life happen, and to that as well
Of thy dear mother...
Abel. Heav'ns! the day will come,
When I shall seek for you, and nowhere find
Either of my belovèd parents then?
Adam. He forces me to weep, alas! with this
His innocent discourse. What shall we do,
My Eve, what shall we do?
Cain. Why weepest thou,
Father beloved?
Abel. My mother too (O God!),
Conceals her face and weeps. Have I perchance
Displeased you with my speech? O pardon me,
And I will ask no more vexatious questions.
Adam (*aside*). I grieve not for myself; I worse deserved:
These guiltless ones bewail I. Ah, how vast
The happiness of which my fault deprived them!—
Cain. Let us be silent, Abel. See, our father
Talks to himself in grave and pensive wise.
Adam. My sons, the night draws on; go to your rest:

Your father blesses you: in God rejoicing,
Sleep ye: and with the morning's earliest rays
From your fraternal couch will I arouse you.
Now calmly sleep, in the profound repose
Of happy innocence.
Abel. Let's go; already
I can no more, from very weariness.
Cain. Let's go; but, mother, thou must bless us first.
Eve. At the same time, dear sons, embrace I you.[1]

Scene III.

ADAM, EVE.

Adam. Eve, tell me if thou ever saidst a word
To our dear sons of my lost happiness?
Eve. I never did: thou bad'st me not: I spoke not.
Adam. And I, incautiously, by grief o'ercome,
Well-nigh betray'd myself just now. Ah, never
Let them the story learn! I much should fear
That they would therefore love us less. Now, come;
Let us retire to rest.—Almighty Father,
Over us may Thy watchful eye keep guard!

ACT III.

Scene I.

Night. Adam's Cottage.

LUCIFER, SIN, ENVY, DEATH, DEMONS; ABEL *and* CAIN *sleeping;* ADAM *and* EVE *sleeping.*

Lucif. But those Celestial Angels, where are they,
Always so ready us to drive away?
Sin. They at thy coming maybe were surprised,
And turn'd their backs . . .
Lucif. If so, they're well advised.

[1] The sons retire to their couch, opposite to that occupied by Eve and Adam, after the last words of the Act.

But quick, before fresh armèd bands arrive,
Fresh succor bearing,
To place a harsh bit on our daring,
Our work to finish let us strive.

Chorus of Demons.

Death, Envy, all man's bliss and joy
Poison, eradicate, destroy!
All happy mem'ries of the past dissever,
And in the future, may he weep for ever!

Chorus of Lucifer, Sin, Envy, and Death.

Poison, eradicate, destroy
Man's ev'ry joy!

Chorus of Demons.

Now have arrived the pow'rs of Hell,
The stubborn ones to punish well.
Poison, eradicate, destroy
Man's ev'ry joy!

Lucif.

And tremble not.

All.

And tremble not.
Man's ev'ry joy
Now fearlessly destroy!

Envy.

This one shall be my prey,
Now sleeping on his back:
His face is mark'd with passions black.
Quick, quick, good snake, away!
And round his inmost heart entwine,
And gnaw it into atoms fine.

Death.

And I prefer this other,
Lying beside his brother.

His youthful figure does me good:
I'll bless him now.
Sleep thou! Sleep thou!
To-morrow I will drain thy blood.
Yes, youth! I will begin on thee
My living, which no life will be.
How will that other couple sleeping there
Be fill'd with blank despair!

Lucif.

Already doth thy subtle livid snake
Crawl over Cain; his inmost heart is bitten
By its dread chill. And thou dost certain make
The fast approaching doom of Abel:
Upon his face I see it written;
He cannot 'scape thy scythe inexorable.

Daughters, ye well have done your enterprise:
That which remains, but little is, I wot.
Now seen, and now unseen; now in disguise,
Now in our proper shapes; in ev'ry spot,
Afar off now, now near at hand again,
We must observe the pair,
And take good care
That both the bitter chalice fully drain.

Now let us go: approaching is the day:
Let then their sleep depart, and light appear.
Before these mortals' eyes again give way
To the approach of idle slumber here,
They with excessive tears consumed shall be.
Now let us go; around that threshold we
Full arm'd will hover, and observe our prey.

SCENE II.[1]

CAIN, *and the others, sleeping.*

Cain. What's this? what's this? . . . Am I awake? . . .
How is it
That sleep, before the morning's dawn has come,

[1] All the Demons have disappeared. Cain awakes, and jumps up from his couch.

Abandons me? it still is night. That sleep,
Have I perchance, with all my daily sweat,
Not earn'd it properly? . . . Behold, these others
Meanwhile sleep peacefully. What will they do,
What will they do, when they awake and rise
From their effem'nate couch? Cain here, Cain there,
'Tis always Cain, Cain, Cain: and then the dear one,
The apple of our parents' eyes, is Abel.
In vain I seek to hide this from myself,
But I too plainly see it. Why stay longer
With those who are such foes to thee?—O Heavens!
My brother, mother, father, foes to me? . . .
Am I awake? What did I say? . . . What chill,
Unfelt before, my bosom now assails?
And in the middle of the chill, why burn I
With sudden wrath? What did I say? . . . I said:
I wish to leave this nest of thankless ones
For ever. Yes, 'twill easy be for me,
With this strong arm, both food and quietness
To conquer for myself. Ah, too unequal
The bargain was between us: with my sweat
I can at least regain my liberty.
Come, then, hard pickaxe! do thou come with me,
As my companion; wild beasts fear I not,
When arm'd with thee: O pickaxe, thou to me
Shalt be both arms, and riches, and my sole
Paternal heritage. I cannot stay:
A hand invisible now drags me forth
All forcibly. I go then. Nevermore
Can I behold those others, all immersed
So placidly in sleep by them usurp'd.
Let me no more behold them; no, no more!

Scene III.

LUCIFER *and* ENVY *reappear.*

Lucif.

Quick, follow him! The fury wild
Which ought to gnaw his heart, is absent yet;
Quick, follow him, my child!
Seize him, and make thy work complete!

Envy.

Out of my sight he shall not pass:
Meanwhile for us the snake is working,
And, in his bosom lurking,
Destroys, in one promiscuous mass,
His eyes, soul, senses, mind and heart.

Lucif.

If so, to keep a watch on him thou art
Enough: my duty it shall be
To watch these other ones apart,
While a black cloud doth cover me.

Scene IV.

ADAM, EVE, ABEL; LUCIFER *in a cloud.*

Adam.[1] Up, up, my sons! My darling sons, enough
Ye now have slumber'd; and the time has come
To render thanks, and praises sing to God,
Before ye go to work again . . . What see I?
Has Cain gone out already? he more prompt
Than is his father? Have I then delay'd
Later than usual? no: a doubtful ray
Is only just beginning to make war
On the black air.—Where art thou, then, my Cain?
Where art thou, Cain?—His pickaxe, too, I see not
In its accustom'd place! has he then gone
To work already? without Abel too?
Before I have embraced him, and have bless'd him?
It seems to me, and is, impossible . . .
Eve, come thou; and assist me in my search
For Cain.

Eve. What is't? is he not lying still
By Abel's side?

Adam. No; and although I've call'd him
In all directions loudly sev'ral times,
He answers not.

Eve. Alas! this frightens me.
Without his brother, he is never wont

[1] Rising from his couch.

To move a step; still less before the dawn.
At what time did he leave? let's hear if Abel
Can tell us aught. Awake, my son! arise!
It is full time.
Abel.[1] O mother! thou wilt save me:
Thy voice doth snatch me from a wicked monster:
Save me, O mother, save me.
Eve. Why thus speak?
What hast thou seen? what fearest thou?
Adam. O God!
This dawn appears as the ill messenger
Of an unlucky day to break.
Eve. My son,
Take courage: thou art in thy mother's arms.
What fear'st thou? panting . . .
Abel. Mother! . . . A black cloud
Is only now removing from mine eyes,
And that but slowly . . . Now I find at length
A little breath.
Adam. From whence can have arisen
Such, and so great distress? . . .
Abel. My dreams, which ever
Have peaceful been and sweet, throughout this night
Have been to me the cause of fearful anguish.
And at the moment when I in my sleep,
Hearing thy voice, sprang to my feet, just then
Methought that I was standing in the deep
Cave of the fountain; whilst I in the waves,
Limpid and cold, held both my naked arms,
And let them dangle down, that I might draw
Out of my veins the sun's excessive heat,
From out the water suddenly a monster
Sprang up, and tried to seize me. I fell back
Upon the ground. Then presently I thought
That I beheld my timid flock in flight,
As though pursued; and then I heard the howls
Of an unknown wild beast that mangled them,
Mix'd with the groans of my dear tender lambs:
I call'd on Cain for help with all my might;
But he return'd no answer. Then I ran

[1] Springing to his feet, and running to his mother's arms.

To give assistance to my flock, and ran
Still faster. But no sooner did the monster
Observe me, than he left the lambs, and leap'd
With wide-extending jaws upon my back;
His eyes appear'd like fire: six times was he
The size of our great dog; his teeth met in me.—
O God! what fearful chill I felt! And lo!
Mother, I hear thy voice; and find myself
Within thine arms.

Adam. And didst not thou perceive
When Cain arose?

Abel. Not I. Is he not lying
Still on the spot he occupied when we
Lay down together?

Eve. Lo, the morning now
Has dawn'd. Let us bow down before our great
Father Omnipotent: 'tis He alone
Who all our ills can cure: and only He
Can drive away all terror from our breasts.

Adam. I, too, would fain adore Him, but I feel
A certain obstacle oppose my prayers,
And make me dumb. And yet, God knows if I
Still trust in Him, in Him alone! Now, tell me,
Eve, if thy soul is also lying in
A state of torpor? or am I alone
By it assail'd?

Eve. O look! Behold yon cloud,
All black, except where bounded by a fringe,
Which seems to be of blood! A such-like cloud
I saw before, but not so terrible,
Upon that day when to assail me came
That cursèd serpent with its foul deceit.
Unhappy we! alas! some great misfortune
Hangs over us.

Abel. Are ye then frighten'd both
By my late dream? And are we all immersed
In grief, and yet does Cain abandon us?
I fly upon his track. Do ye remain
And offer prayers to God, that I with him
May here return, and all may, re-united,
Fulfil our sacred duties. I full soon

Will find him, doubtless in the field; perchance
E'en now he needs assistance. Maybe he
Has by a like black dream been torn away
From his unquiet couch.
Adam. Who knows! 'tis so
Perchance. In any case, thou well hast spoken,
My son; it is not right to let the day
Commence, till we have all together raised
Our voice to God. Go, run, and quick return.
Eve. One instant wait, my son, that I may first
Embrace thee. Now, then, go, and with thy brother
Quickly return: and tell him that we all
By him alone in mortal grief are placed.
Now, lose no time![1]—How quickly he has gone! . . .
It seems as if his light feet went on wings.

SCENE V.

ADAM, EVE. *Afterwards* THE VOICE OF GOD.

Adam. Alas! we have done wrong in letting him,
Dear child, proceed alone . . .
Eve. Ah! yes . . .
Adam. But why
Do nothing more than think? I'll call him back . . .
But, he has gone too far. And if I follow'd? . . .
O Heav'ns! thee must I leave . . . Why am I fill'd
By such a wild unwonted perturbation?
Eve. Let's follow him together.
Adam. What would happen,
If they return'd here by some other way,
And found that we had gone? while we in turn
Could find no trace of them? Thou see'st that we
Should be exposed to double anguish then.
Let's trust in God meanwhile: in short . . .
Eve. I feel
Emotions indescribable; a grief
Unbounded weighs me down: my tears just now,
When Abel I embraced, an op'ning forced
From out mine eyes: it seem'd to me as though

[1] On Abel's departure, the cloud behind which Lucifer stood, disappears.

I for the last time were embracing him.
And then his dreadful dream! . . . O God! if ever,
By God's permission, such a beast . . . How wrong,
How wrong wert thou in not thyself proceeding
In search of Cain!

Adam. My dearest wife! now calm
Thy soul a little: I already feel
That I am stronger. From my side methinks
That a mysterious heavy vapor dark
Has been removed: my heart no longer suffers
From that unknown accursèd stench; my mind
No more is clouded o'er. Yes, I did wrong,
Quite wrong, in sending Abel thus alone:
'Twas only I that should have gone in search
Of Cain; how could I so unthinking be
At such a time? If I had shouted, Cain
Had heard me, even though he might have gone
Beyond the wood. O God! what shall I do?
Follow? I leave thee; wait for them? perchance
They'll not return. Let us, belovèd Eve,
Bow low before our Maker: blend thy prayers
With mine in silence; till from His abode
His voice sonorous, coming to our aid,
Instructs us.

Eve. Yes, before Him let us bow.

Adam.[1]

Father and Lord, our safety and our light!
Thou all dost know, Thou all dost see,
And nought can e'er occur against Thy will:
If therefore false appears to Thee
The cause which has produced these shades of night,
One breath from Thee will chase away the ill:
But if, Great Maker, it to Thee seems right
That by misfortune we should punish'd be,
Grant, not that we may 'scape it, for each woe
We merit; but that we may know
Which of us is in jeopardy.

[1] After a short instrumental harmony, Adam intones this prayer in musical tones.

The voice of God.[1]

Adam, arise! Thy prayers to Me
Are not displeasing: but fix'd laws that know
No change, bid thee to bow to destiny,
Which rules imperiously all things below.[2]

Chorus of Invisible Angels.

Adam, a man thou art:
All things created, destiny doth guide;
Thou, too, must bow before it. Trust thy heart
Rather to God, than to all else beside.

A voice of the Chorus.

Fewer the sands beneath the sea,
Fewer the stars of heav'n will be
Than they who will from thee derive their birth.
In countless numbers with the race
Of human beings will the face
Be cover'd of the boundless-stretching earth.

Another voice.

But then with man created were
His good and evil, mighty in their sum,
But weigh'd by destiny in balance fair.
Adversity, the whetstone where the gold
Of virtue will be sharpen'd, and become
Able to cope with troubles manifold.
Prosperity, the rock against whose side
The bark of human wit
So light, will surely split,
Steer'd by its wonted pilot, human pride.

The voice of God.[3]

Whate'er they be, your destinies recline
On high resolves eternal.
Turn, turn to the supernal
Maker of all things humbly, then, thine eye;
And, like a son resign'd, ne'er try
To penetrate, with those weak pow'rs of thine,
The cause of mysteries divine.—

[1] Preceded by thunder and lightning. [2] Thunder and lightning.
[3] Preceded and followed by thunder and lightning.

Adam. Let us adore and tremble, Eve; and, born
To weeping, let us weep: nought else remains.
Now rise we; and God's lofty will in silence,
Whate'er it be, await. Too much have we
God disobey'd upon that first occasion.
But in the meantime we should not abandon
Our sons; ah no! this neither God commands,
Nor destiny. Now let us go; and seek them
In all directions: come; and then we four,
In one united, will await the blows
Aim'd at us all by cruel destiny.

Eve. O ye dear sons! where are ye? On their track
Let us go quickly. Ah, how great and many
The terrors warring on a mother's heart!

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A vast open Country.

ABEL, *preceded by* LUCIFER, *invisible to him.*

Abel. Behold, upon the track of him I seek
I have attain'd at last the desert plain;
And scarcely is the wood to be discern'd,
Which I have left behind. How many times
Have I already cried: Cain! Cain! and he
From time to time an answer gives to me,
But whence, I know not; and I cannot see him.
Now on this side, now that, and oft in front,
And presently behind, I seem to have him;
But all the more that I advance, the more
The voice appears to move away.—Cain, Cain!
My brother dear . . .

Lucif.[1] O Abel! art thou there?

Abel.[2] 'Tis I; O show thyself!—How can it be
That on this vast and naked plain his voice

[1] Imitating the voice of Cain.
[2] Turning towards the voice he heard.

Is heard by me, and I not see him? Ah,
This is a matter inconceivable.
Cain, Cain! I pray thee that thou'lt come to me;
Weary am I; O come! . . . He hears me not.
What shall I do? how all alone am I!
How can I venture to return without him?
What will my father say? and then his grief?
And that of hapless Eve? and mine? I live
Without my Cain? I feel a little stronger:
Further I'll go: he cannot be behind.
Cain, Cain, where art thou now?
Lucif. Still farther on.
Abel. He's there again: how far away it sounds!
I see it now: he has advanced to where
Runs the great river in a gorge profound,
Which I ne'er saw; but then our father told us
That there the river was. I there shall find it.
I cannot see it, for it is conceal'd
By the steep banks: but I will find it. Cain,
I come, I come; O wait for me. I fly there.

SCENE II.

ENVY, DEATH, *disguised.*

Death.

Whither dost drag me still,
Disguised in this strange way?
When can I kill?
When shall I have my prey?

Envy.

In silence follow: or speak little, I entreat,
And help me in arranging my deceit.
Thou art my mother now: and must conceal
'Neath this thick veil that hideous face of thine:
And ev'ry time that I a signal make,
Short answers give, but with maternal zeal.
Thou know'st that I to banter ne'er incline;
Spoil not the work which I now undertake.

Death.

It shall be so:
Nought else I know,
But how to mow;
For me prepare
A harvest rare.

Envy.

Lo, here is Cain: come, let us stand apart.
Before we show ourselves at all,
Let's learn if cruel is his heart,
If he has drain'd the serpent's gall.

Scene III.

CAIN.[1]

What dost thou, Cain? where art thou wand'ring?... Oft
Have I turn'd round in order to return,
And ev'ry time a force to me unknown
Compels me to remove still farther off
From my paternal home. Unwonted wrath
Devours, consumes me; and on what to vent it,
I know not.—At the same time on my heart
Re-echo all the mournful lamentations
Of my unhappy parents, who in vain
Assuredly now seek me. And my dear
Brother in love... Whom do I say? ah, fool!
What thinkest thou? thy parents find their all
In their son Abel; he alone suffices
For both thy parents and for God: methinks
That the Creator for the sacrifices
Of only Abel cares.—Ah, there is none
Who seeks for Cain; and none who cares for Cain.
So let it be: and I, too, care for none.—
How know'st thou this? What have they said, or done,
To make thee think so? Yesterday at night,
When all was peaceful, after our glad supper,
Was it not thou, O Cain, who first receivedst
The blessing of thy father? then beside

[1] Enters from the same place as Abel, as if he had been behind him.

Thy tender loving brother, holding him
Tightly embraced around his neck, didst thou
Not fall asleep, quite happy? Whence, how, why,
Did I awake 'midst such terrific ravings?
Why am I now a fugitive, ungrateful,
A wanderer, to reason deaf, alas,
From truth divided? Courage! I am victor;
Yes, I have vanquish'd my ignoble passion.
To you return I straightway, O my dear,
My much-loved parents; yes, to you, who love me
As much as Abel, more than I deserve.—
But, what do I behold? what can it be?
Two human creatures now before me stand?
And now they are approaching? dress'd like Eve!
One has a face as blooming as is Abel's,
But still more handsome! are there, then, on earth
Others of our own race? and yet my father
Has ever told me that we stood alone . . .

Scene IV.

ENVY, CAIN, DEATH.

Envy. Why tremble, O youth, why thus fixedly stare,
While fiercely is beating thy heart, on the wound
Which is made doubly sore by the chilling despair
Of the snakes which entwine it, like ivy, around?
O deign, if thou'rt fearless, and fain wouldst be there
Where joy never ending is certainly found,
O deign of the waters transparent to think,
Which make those men happy supremely, who drink.

Cain. O who art thou who in these accents strange
Addressest me? Are there upon the earth
Men that we know not of? Remove my doubts,
I pray thee: tell me who thou art: but use
A language that doth more resemble mine,
That I more easily may understand it.

Envy. Thou son of Adam, by thy speech I know thee.
'Twas not sufficient for thy father then
To get himself expell'd, with so much shame,
From that terrestrial lovely Paradise,
Where I with multitudes of others dwell?
For him 'twas not enough? he furthermore

Must keep his own son in deep ignorance
Of the great good thus lost, and take away
The slightest chance of e'er regaining it?
Cain. What dost thou say? there was a Paradise
On earth? and from it Adam banish'd was?
And he from his own son so vast a good
Conceals, and hinders?
Envy. Harsh and unjust father,
He envies his own son that happiness,
Of which he was unworthy. There, beyond
The banks of the great river, I was standing
With this my mother dear: and thence I saw
(For those who dwell there all things see and know)
Thee as a fugitive, thy father's dwelling
Leaving, and hither coming . . .
Cain. How canst thou
This know of me, whilst I . . .
Envy. We're not alike.
To us, the happy and perpetual dwellers
Upon that further shore, all things are easy.
There, matters distant or not understood,
Or things impossible, are words unknown:
Brothers and sisters numerous are we,
And sons and fathers; there to ev'ry man
Is coupled one like me; as thou hast seen
Eve with thy father live.—I pity took
Upon thy ignorance; and therefore came
As far as this to meet thee. Do but try
To cross the limpid waves, and thou'lt become
Straightway like me; and there, if thou so will it,
Possessor of my beauty thou mayst be;
As I may, if I please, divide with thee
Each of the many things that I possess
Collected in that happy place together.
Cain. How is it possible that my dear father,
Who loves us so, could cruelly conceal
So vast a good? Thou with thy words dost wake
Within my heart a contrast wonderful.
Thy beauty moves me much; the flatt'ring hope
Of thee; thy sweet discourse, the like of which
I never heard before; yes, I am moved
By all in thee: but how can I abandon

Ungratefully those dear ones to the toil
Of ceaseless labor, whilst I pass myself
An idle life at ease amid delights?
Envy. Thou thinkest well. Slave, then, and suffer thou,
Fatigue thyself, and sweat. Meanwhile another
Will occupy thy place before thee there.
Cain. Another? who?
Envy. Thou'rt very blind.
Cain. Perchance,
Is there but room for one?
Envy. For one alone
Of Adam's sons a passage there is granted:
Conceal'd from thee, but not from all . . .
Cain. O what,
What chill again pervades me! horrible
The doubt I feel . . .
Envy. The thing is manifest,
Not doubtful: I perceive thy ev'ry thought:
Yes, Adam to his Abel all reveal'd,
But hid from thee . . .
Cain. What hear I!
Envy. And the place
For him reserves he.
Cain. Madness! That thick mist
Which so obscured my eyesight suddenly
Has disappear'd: I now behold the source
Of that unknown and indistinct fierce impulse,
Which, at the sight, and even at the name
Of Abel, thrill'd me through, from time to time.
Envy. Thou now dost know it all. Only take care
Lest Abel should anticipate thy steps.
As soon as thou hast reach'd the other shore,
I'll meet thee, and be thine: but I may not
Go with thee to the crossing: and meanwhile,
To strengthen thee in thy design, observe
What I will do.—Now, mother, just to give him
A little sample of our happy race,
Which he will find beyond those waters, say,
Would it not fitting be to let him see
The sudden apparition of a fine
Well-chosen troop of them?

Death. Do as thou will'st,
Dear daughter.
Envy. Thou shalt see, Cain, presently
A handsome people, and harmonious dances
To dulcet notes danced nimbly, which thy heart
Will ravish.—Now, dear brothers, swiftly come;
Appear as rapidly as flies my thought.[1]

Scene V.

Death, Envy, Cain, Chorus *of Male and Female Dancers;* Chorus *of Male and Female Singers.*

Chorus.[2]

His cheeks shall both be overflow'd
With tears, with sweat his brow,
To whom it is not granted now
Into our joyous land to press:
But he who in our bright abode
His happy feet can plant,
Has written down in adamant
His full eternal happiness.

Right-hand Chorus.

In this drear place of misery,
How sad the fate of hapless man,
Condemn'd by cruel destiny
To earn his food as best he can!

Left-hand Chorus.

The man who here doth dwell, we know,
A man like one of us is not:
He has been struck a deadly blow,
Which utterly has changed his lot.

All.

He who the apple tasted ne'er,
Shall he not all life's pleasures share?

[1] Strikes her foot on the ground. The different Choruses of musicians and dancers immediately appear on every side.

[2] Whilst the musical Chorus is singing, divided into two parts, the others interweave various dances.

A voice.[1]

He shall not lose them, no, no, no.—
Thou, who of the rigid
Ignored prohibition
Nothing dost know;
O come to the frigid
Glad stream of fruition,
And drown there each woe.
Man shall not lose anew
The rights that are his due.

All.

He shall not lose them, no, no, no.

A woman's voice in the Chorus.

Thou son of Adam, come where we
Are living in a feast eternal,
Which equalleth the life supernal
In its supreme felicity.

Thou ne'er hast seen the sun's rays blend
So brilliantly as there;
Thou ne'er hast seen from Heav'n descend
Such manna sweet and fair,
As in that place thou'lt see:

A man's voice.

There only doth the stream o'erflow
With milk of whitest hue;
There on each tree and hedge doth grow
The purest honey dew,
Man's nutriment to be.

The two voices.

Thou son of Adam, come where we
Are living in a feast eternal,
Which equalleth the life supernal
In its supreme felicity.

[1] When any single voice of the Chorus is singing, the dances are suspended; and are recommenced as soon as the entire Chorus resumes.

All.

Thou son of Adam, come where we
Are living in felicity.
Quick, quick! Make haste! Away!
If thou shouldst long delay,
Another, with a step less slow,
Before thee will arrive there soon.
If thou dost know how vast the boon,
Thou wilt not lose it, no, no, no.[1]

Scene VI.

DEATH, CAIN, ENVY.

Envy. Do thou awake from out thy stupor, Cain.
Thou hast both seen and heard: then nought remains
For me, but as a pledge of faith, to give thee
My hand. Come, take it.[2]

Scene VII.

CAIN.

Cain. Ah, I pray thee, stay . . .
—What frightful chill has pierced my heart! my blood
Appears to stagnate there, all frozen . . . O,
What dreadful flame has now succeeded it!
I follow thee, for fear that villain Abel
Should first arrive there.

Scene VIII.

CAIN *and* ABEL.[3]

Abel. Cain! what is't I see?
Cain.[4] Ah, traitor! dost thou come from there? I soon
Will punish thee.
Abel.[5] Help, mother, help me, help!
Cain.[6] Fly as thou mayst, I'll overtake thee soon.

[1] This line is repeated several times. When the Chorus ceases, the dancers and singers disappear.
[2] As she touches his hand, she disappears with her mother.
[3] Turning towards the river.
[4] Running towards him with his pickaxe.
[5] Flying backwards.
[6] Following him, and disappearing from view.

ACT V.[1]

SCENE I.

CAIN, ABEL.

Cain. Come, villain, come![2]
Abel. O my dear brother, pity!
What have I done? . . .
Cain. Come! far away indeed
From that much-long'd-for river shalt thou breathe
Thy final vital breath.
Abel. Ah, hear thou me!
My brother, do thou hearken!
Cain. No; that good
Which was my due, but which I ne'er received,
Shall ne'er be thine. Perfidious one, behold,
Around thee look; this is the desert waste,
From which I fled, and where thou leftest me:
Thy last looks never shall behold those waters
Which thou, in thy disloyal thoughts, didst deem
As cross'd already: here, upon this sand,
Thou soon shalt lie a corpse.
Abel. But, O my God!
What means all this? at least explain thy words:
I understand thee not: explain, and hear me;
Thou afterwards mayst slay me at thy will,
But hear me first, I pray.
Cain. Say on.
Abel. But tell me,
In what have I offended thee? . . . Alas!
How can I speak to thee, if fierce and stern
Thou standest o'er me? neck and nostrils swollen;
Looks full of fire and blood; thy lips, thy face
All livid; whilst thy knees, thine arms, thy head
Are moved convulsively by trembling strange!—
Pity, my brother: calm thyself: and loosen

[1] Between the fourth and fifth Acts, nothing takes place except a short symphony, until Cain overtakes his brother and brings him back. The scene remains the same.

[2] Dragging him by the hair.

Thy hold upon my hair a little, so
That I may breathe.
Cain. I never fancied, Abel,
That thou wouldst be a traitor.
Abel. I am not.
My father knows it; and thou too.
Cain. My father?
Ne'er name him: father of us both alike,
And just, I deem'd him, and I was deceived.
Abel. What sayest thou? Dost doubt his love? thou scarce
Hadst gone away from us this morning, when,
Anxious for thee, with mortal sorrow fill'd,
My father straightway sent me on thy track . . .
Cain. Perfidious ones, I know it all; to me
This was a horrible, undoubted proof
Of my bad brother and my still worse father.
I know it all; the veil has fall'n; the secret
Has been reveal'd to me: and I'm resolved
That thou shalt ne'er be happy at my cost.
Abel. Cain, by that God who both of us created,
And who maintains us, I entreat of thee,
Explain thyself: what is my fault? what secret
Has been reveal'd to thee? upon my face,
And in my eyes, and words, and countenance,
Does not my innocence reveal itself?
I happy at thy cost? O, how could Abel
Be happy if thou'rt not? Ah, hadst thou seen me,
When I awoke, and found thee not beside me
This morning! Ah, how sorely did I weep!
And how our parents wept! The livelong day
Have I since then consumed, but fruitlessly,
In seeking thee and sadly calling thee,
But never finding thee; although I heard
Thy voice in front of me from time to time,
In the far distance answering: and I
Went ever further on in search of thee,
Up to yon river; over whose broad waves
I fear'd that thou, who art a swimmer bold,
Hadst cross'd . . .
Cain. And of that river darest thou,

Foolhardy one, a single word to speak?
I well believe thou *fearedst, if I cross'd it,*
That thou *wouldst* have for ever *lost the hope*
Of crossing it thyself. *Thou darest, too,*
To mingle truth and *falsehood? and assert*
That I replied *to thee? But now the end*
Of ev'ry wicked art has come: in vain
Thou soughtest to anticipate my steps:
Thou see'st that I have caught thee just in time:
Nor river, nor the light of heav'n shalt thou
E'er see again. I'll kill thee; fall thou down!
Abel. Keep back thy axe! O do not strike me! See,
I fall before thee, and embrace thy knees.
Keep back thy axe, I pray thee! Hear thou me:
The sound of this my voice, in yonder fields,
Has soothed thee oftentimes, when much incensed,
Now with the stubborn clods, now with the lambs,
But thou wast ne'er so angry as thou'rt now.
Dear brother of my heart . . .
Cain. I'm so no more.
Abel. But I shall ever be so: thou art too:
I pledge to thee my innocence: I swear it
By both our parents; I have never heard
One word about this river; nor can fathom
Thy accusations.
Cain. Can there be such malice,
Such craftiness, at such a tender age?
All this dissembling makes me madder still;
Vile liar . . .
Abel. What! thou call'st thy Abel, liar?
Cain. Die now.
Abel. Embrace me first.
Cain. I hate thee.
Abel. I
Still love thee. Strike, if thou wilt have it so;
I'll not resist; but I have not deserved it.
Cain. —And yet, his weeping, and his juvenile
Candor, which true appears, the sweet accustom'd
Sound of his voice, restrain me: and my arm
And anger fall.—But, shall a foolish pity
Rob me for ever of my property?...
Alas! what to resolve? what do?

Abel. What say'st thou
Apart? Turn tow'rds me: look at me: in vain
Thou hid'st from me thy face: amidst thy fierce
And dreadful ravings, from thy moisten'd eye
Gleam'd there upon me just one passing ray
Of love fraternal and of pity. Take,
I pray thee, pity on my tender youth,
And on thyself. O! dost thou think that God
Can afterwards take pleasure in thy prayers,
Or gifts, if with the blood of thine own brother
He sees thee dyed? And then our excellent
Unhappy mother, wouldst thou rob her thus
Of both her sons? for, certainly, if thou
Shouldst slay me, thou wouldst never dare again
To show thyself before her. Ah, just think
How that unhappy one can live without us:
Think too . . .

Cain. Ah, brother! thou dost rend my heart:
Rise, then, arise: I pardon thee: in this
Embrace . . . What do I? and what said I? Base one,
Thy tears are but a juggle: and not doubtful
Thy treason is; thou dost not merit pardon;
I will not pardon thee.

Abel. What see I? Fiercer
Dost thou become than ever?

Cain. I become
What I should be to thee. Come now what may;
The good denied me, none shall have instead.—
No more of pardon, no more pity; thou
Hast now no brother, father, mother more.
My eye is dimm'd already with thick blood:
I see a monster at my feet. Now, die!
What holds me back? What seizes on my arm?
What voice is thundering?

Abel. God sees us.

Cain. God?
Methinks I hear Him: now methinks I see Him,
Pursuing me in fearful wise: already
I see my own ensanguined axe fall down
Upon my guilty head with crashing sound!

Abel. His senses he has lost. Sad sight! I tremble . . .
From head to foot . . .

Cain. Thou, Abel, do thou take
This axe; and strike with both thy hands, upon
My head. Why dost thou tarry? now behold,
I offer no defence: be quick, and slay me:
Slay me; for in no other way canst thou
Escape my fury, which is fast returning:
I pray thee then, make haste.
Abel. What do I hear?
That I should strike thee? why, if I still love thee
As much as ever? Calm thyself: become
Thyself again: let's both our father seek:
He waits for thee...
Cain. My father? to my father
Go now with thee? I understand: thyself
Hast thou betray'd. The mention of his name
Fiercer than ever wakens all my rage.
Once more then, die thou, die.[1]
Abel. Alas!... I feel
My strength depart... O mother!...
Cain. What, O what
Have I now done? his blood spurts o'er my face!
He falls; he faints... Where hide myself? O Heav'ns!
What have I done? Accursèd axe, begone
For ever from my hand, my eyes... What hear I?
Alas! already doth the thund'ring voice
Of God upon me call... O where to fly?
There, raves my father in wild fury... Here,
My dying brother's sobs... Where hide myself?
I fly.[2]

SCENE II.

ABEL,[3] *then* ADAM.

Abel. Ah dreadful pain!... O, how my blood
Is running down!...
Adam.[4] Already tow'rds the west
The sun approaches fast, and I as yet
Have found them not! The livelong day have I
And Eve consumed in searching for them both,

[1] Strikes him. [2] Flies. [3] Dying.
[4] In the direction of the wood.

And all without success . . . But this is surely
The track of Abel: I will follow it.[1]
Abel. Alas! help, help! . . . O mother! . . .
Adam. O, what hear I?
Sobs of a human being, like the wails
Of Abel! . . . Heav'ns! what see I there? a stream
Of blood? . . . Alas! a body further on? . . .
Abel! My son, thou here? . . . Upon thy body
Let me at least breathe forth my own last breath!
Abel. My father's voice, methinks . . . O! is it thou? . . .
My eyes are dim, and ill I see . . . Ah, tell me,
Shall I again behold . . . my . . . darling mother? . . .
Adam. My son! . . . sad day! . . . sad sight! . . . How deep and large
The wound with which his guiltless head is cloven!
Alas! there is no remedy. My son,
Who gave thee such a blow? and what the weapon? . . .
O Heav'ns! Is't not Cain's pickaxe that I see
Lying all-bloody there? . . . O grief! O madness!
And is it possible that Cain has slain thee?
A brother kill his brother? I myself
Will arm, with thy own arms; and find thee out,
And with my own hands slay thee. O thou just
Almighty God, didst Thou behold this crime,
And suffer it? breathes still the murderer?
Where is the villain? Didst not Thou, great God,
Beneath the feet of such a monster cause
The very earth to gape and swallow him
In its profound abyss? Then, 'tis Thy will,
Ah yes! that by my hand should punish'd be
This crime irreparable: 'tis Thy will
That I should follow on the bloody track
Of that base villain: here it is: from me,
Thou wicked Cain, shalt thou receive thy death . . .
O God! But leave my Abel breathing still . . .
Abel. Father! . . . return, return! . . . I fain would tell thee . . .
Adam. My son, but how could Cain . . .
Abel. He was . . . indeed . . .

[1] Advances.

Beside himself: . . . it was not he . . . Moreover . . .
He is thy son . . . O pardon him, . . . as I do . . .
Adam. Thou only art my son. Devotion true!
O Abel! my own image! thou, my all! . . .
How could that fierce . . .
Abel. Ah, father! . . . tell me . . . truly;
Didst thou e'er plan . . . to take away . . . from Cain, . . .
And give . . . to me . . . some mighty good, . . . which lies
Beyond . . . the river?
Adam. What dost mean? one son
Alone I deem'd that I possess'd in both.
Abel. Deceived . . . was Cain then; . . . this he said to me . . .
Ofttimes, . . . inflamed with rage . . . The only cause . . .
Was this: . . . he had . . . a conflict fierce . . . and long . . .
Within himself . . . at first; . . . but . . . then . . . o'ercome,
He struck me . . . and then fled . . .—But now . . . my breath,
Father, . . . is failing . . . Kiss me . . .
Adam. He is dying . . .
O God! . . . He dies.—Unhappy father! How
Has that last sob cut off at once his voice
And life as well!—Behold thee, then, at last,
Death terrible and cruel, who the daughter
Of my transgression art! O ruthless Death,
Is, then, the first to fall before thy blows
A guileless youth like this? 'Twas me the first,
And me alone, whom thou shouldst have struck down . . .
—What shall I do without my children now?
And this dear lifeless body, how can I
From Eve conceal it? Hide from her the truth?
In vain: but, how to tell her? And, then, where,
Where bury my dear Abel? O my God!
How tear myself from him?—But, what behold I?
Eve is approaching me with weary steps
From far! She promised me that she would wait
Beyond the wood for me . . . Alas!—But I
Must meet her and detain her; such a sight
Might in one moment kill her . . . How I tremble!
Already she has seen me, and makes haste . . .

SCENE III.

EVE AND ADAM.[1]

Adam. Why, woman, hast thou come? 'tis not allow'd
Farther to go: return; return at once
Unto our cottage; there will I ere long
Rejoin thee.
Eve. Heav'ns! what see I? in thy face
What new and dreadful trouble do I see?
Hast thou not found them?
Adam. No: but, very soon . . .
Do thou meanwhile retrace thy steps, I pray . . .
Eve. And leave thee? . . . And my children, where are they?
But, what do I behold? thy vesture stain'd
With quite fresh blood? thy hands, too, dyed with blood?
Alas! what is't, my darling Adam, say!
Yet on thy body are no wounds . . . But, what,
What is the blood there on the ground? and near it
Is not the axe of Cain? . . . and that is also
All soil'd with blood? . . . Ah, leave me; yes, I must,
I must approach; to see . . .
Adam. I pray thee, no . . .
Eve. In vain . . .
Adam. O Eve, stop, stop! on no account
Shalt thou go farther.
Eve.[2] But, in spite of thee,
From out thine eyes a very stream of tears
Is pouring! . . . I must see, at any cost,
The reason . . . Ah, I see it now! . . . there lies
My darling Abel . . . O unhappy I! . . .
The axe . . . the blood . . . I understand . . .
Adam. Alas!
We have no sons.
Eve. Abel, my life . . . 'Tis vain
To hold me back . . . Let me embrace thee, Abel.
Adam. To hold her is impossible: a slight
Relief to her immense maternal sorrow . . .
Eve. Adam, has God the murderer not punish'd?
Adam. O impious Cain! in vain thy flight; in vain

[1] Running to meet her. [2] Pushing her way forward a little.

Wilt thou conceal thyself. Within thy ears
(However far away from me thou art)
Shall ring the fearful echo of my threats,
And make thy bosom tremble.
Eve. Abel, Abel . . .
Alas, he hears me not! . . . —I ever told thee,
That I discern'd a traitor's mark, yes, traitor's,
Between Cain's eyebrows.
Adam. Never on the earth
That traitor peace shall find, security,
Or an asylum.—Cain, be thou accursed
By God, as thou art by thy father cursed.
Tremblingly hide thyself amongst the caverns,
Like a wild shaggy beast: upon a few
Vile bitter acorns find uncertainly
Thy meagre fare; with gall all intermingled:
May fierce remorse for ever rend thy heart:
Hateful to thee the sun; may dreadful ghosts
Present themselves to thee throughout each night.
Thus mayst thou drag along thy wretched days
In one long death.—O thou Almighty God,
Do Thou, if just the oath which I have sworn,
Do Thou confirm it, with divine assent!

The voice of God.[1]

Left to thyself, O man, thy nature see!—
Her first blood earth has tasted, shed by Cain;
Your lamentations just are heard by Me:
The dregs of ev'ry horror he shall drain,
A fierce dread warning to the wicked be.—
Dry up your tears, and raise your eyes again
From earthly mire to your Creator, who
A fresh and happier race will give to you.

Eve. Almighty God, O give me Abel back,
Give me back Abel . . .
Adam. Woman, we may weep,
But not repine. God spoke: let us adore.
Eve. I silently adore, on Abel prostrate.[2]

[1] Preceded and followed by thunder and lightning.
[2] Both fall prostrate: Adam, with his face on the earth; Eve, on her dead son.

XXII.

ALCESTIS II.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE characters in this interesting and highly classical play (which is not strictly a tragedy, owing to its happy *dénouement*) are Pheres, formerly king of Thessaly, who had resigned his throne in his lifetime to his son Admetus; Admetus himself, who is lying dangerously ill at the time the play commences; Alcestis his wife; Eumelus his son (who only utters a few words); Hercules; and a Chorus of Thessalian matrons.

The first Act opens with the lamentations of Pheres over his son's illness. He is awaiting a reply from the Delphic Oracle to the enquiries as to the chances of Admetus's recovery. Alcestis enters and tells him that Apollo has granted him his life, but her unhappiness shows that it has only been obtained on sad conditions. She at length confesses, not only that a member of his family must die in his place, but that she has already taken upon herself, by an oath that cannot be broken, to be the victim. Pheres is in despair, and urges that he would be the proper one to die; but she says that in any case it is now too late, and gives reasons why she had thus devoted herself rather than let him or either of her own children be sacrificed. She announces that she feels the fatal fever already assailing her. The Chorus next are seen, offering up hymns to Proserpine to spare Admetus.

In the second Act, Admetus himself enters, suddenly restored to health, and in search of Alcestis. Pheres joins him and rejoices at his recovery; but Admetus tells him that his bodily sickness is replaced by mental malady,

which is distracting him. He describes to his father a fearful vision that he had just had. Apollo first appeared and announced his cure, and he was starting up to hasten to find his wife, when Death stood before him, confessing that Apollo had torn his prey from her, but vowing that in revenge she would make Admetus lead a life of intolerable anguish. Alcestis then comes, and, though she addresses him in words of joy, her face and features show her real misery. She desires to be alone with Admetus, and she then discloses to him the dreadful secret of her impending death. She conjures him to live for the sake of their children and of the kingdom. The Act closes with the lamentations of the Chorus and their supplications to Apollo.

We see in the third Act the dying Alcestis enter, supported by her maidens, and with her son Eumelus and her daughter, and also the Chorus. Admetus stands apart. She lies down to die. The boy vainly tries to rouse his father from his misery. He addresses his wife alternately in angry and loving accents, and then rushes off, intending to kill himself. They stop him and bring him to the couch of Alcestis. She once more insists on his living for the children's sake. Pheres comes and adds his entreaties. Admetus reproaches his father for being the cause of Alcestis's death, first by sending to consult the Oracle, and then by letting Alcestis take his place as the victim. Pheres shows that she had anticipated him by intercepting the Oracle's answer, and that he himself only cared to live for the sake of his aged wife. Admetus is full of remorse. Alcestis takes a fond farewell of them all, and death gradually steals over her, whilst the Chorus, divided into two parts, and surrounding the husband and wife respectively, breathe their alternate hymns.

The fourth Act commences with the entrance of Hercules on the scene of sorrow, just as Alcestis is expiring. He announces that, having heard of the illness of his old friend Admetus (he having formerly been the guest of Pheres and Admetus), he has come to see how he is. The Chorus of Alcestis tell him of his recovery and the sacrifice of Alcestis in his place. He desires them to carry the yet breathing body in haste and secretly to the Temple, and

place it in charge of the prophetess, returning themselves directly. He then rouses Admetus from his lethargy, and tells him not to despair, and departs, promising soon to come back. Admetus somewhat revives, and takes his children to look once more on the form of Alcestis, but finds that she has disappeared, as well as her half of the Chorus. Admetus believes her to be dead; her Chorus re-enter, and he charges them with removing the corpse. He takes a despairing leave of his children and announces his intention of starving himself to death. He confirms this by an oath which can no more be broken than Alcestis herself can return back to life. The Chorus sing a hymn to Jupiter and Hercules.

The last Act discloses Admetus lying at the foot of Proserpine's statue. Pheres and his grandchildren are there, and also the Chorus. Hercules enters, leading a veiled woman, whom he leaves on one side. The Chorus tell him of the oath of Admetus. The latter asks him to bring back the dead body of his spouse. Hercules tells him that he has brought a new wife to take her place, possessed of every imaginable grace and virtue. Admetus reproaches him for his cruelty, but at last Hercules restores to him his living wife in the person of the veiled figure, and assures him that he is now fully relieved from his oath. The curtain falls amidst their universal happiness.

Sismondi says that *Alcestis* does not resemble any of Alfieri's other tragedies. "Conjugal tenderness is beautifully painted in it, and the intervention of supernatural powers and of the Chorus, together with a happy termination, give it quite a different character." In its broad outlines this play resembles Euripides' beautiful tragedy of the same name, which Alfieri also translated, thus leading him to call his own work *Alcestis II.* for the sake of distinction. Both commemorate the tender conjugal affection of the heroine, as spoken of by Milton in his famous sonnet 'On his deceased wife.'

> "Methought I saw my late espousèd saint
> Brought to me, like Alcestis from the grave,
> Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
> Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint."

In Alfieri's version, however, Alcestis had not actually crossed the Stygian stream.

This play is especially interesting, as being the latest in date of Alfieri's tragedies, it having been finally completed by him in September 1799, or only four years before his death, when he was in the maturity of his faculties, and rejoicing in his lately acquired mastery of the Greek language. Both in his Life and in a long Elucidation (*Schiarimento*) accompanying the work itself, he has given an interesting account of the manner in which he worked simultaneously at the two *Alcestis's*, which he meant to be inseparable, as is seen by the Dedication to the Countess of Albany herewith given. It will be seen that Alfieri's Alcestis takes a part in the dialogue after she is restored to life, which is not the case with the Alcestis of Euripides. Schlegel praises Euripides highly for this, as showing his unwillingness to draw aside the mysterious veil which shrouds the condition of the dead. It may be mentioned that the story of Alcestis's return to life is supposed by ancient and modern writers to mean that she was cured of a dangerous illness by a physician named Hercules (see Palaephatus, *De incredib.* 41; Plut. *Amator.* 761).

Alfieri wrote in 1796: "If I had not sworn to myself never to write another tragedy" (see his lines at the end of *The Second Brutus*), "the reading of the Alcestis of Euripides has so touched and inflamed me, that I should set vigorously to work, after closing Euripides, to sketch out a new Alcestis, in which I should avail myself of all the good in the Greek, increasing it where possible, and discard all the laughable matter, of which there is not a little in the text." He afterwards speaks of the tears, sobs, and sighs, with which he wrote the work. In the *Schiarimento* he gives an amusing address made to him in his sleep by a bust of Euripides in his room, ordering him to keep inseparably united together the two versions of Alcestis, his own being pretended to be an alternative version by the great Greek poet himself.

DEDICATION

TO THE NOBLE LADY

THE COUNTESS LOUISA STOLBERG OF ALBANY.[1]

LADY, two lustres perfected are now,
Since on my tragic flights I placed a rein,
And, at Apollo's feet, with solemn vow,
My dagger and my buskin laid again.
To my frail bark, when I wrote MYRRHA, thou
Didst, with thy name, propitious rigging deign
To give; the dedication, then, allow
Of these the fruits of my maturer vein.
The two Alcestis' mirrors are of thee:
Adapted from the Greek to Tuscan ear,
To thee inscribed, my last gift they shall be.
If Time will only check his swift career,
Mine is the good Pheræan's destiny,
If in Admetus' portrait mine appear.

FLORENCE, *December* 1798.

[1] This sonnet is placed in the MSS. before the poet's two versions of *Alcestis*. See also the dedication of *Myrrha*.

ALCESTIS II.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PHERES.	HERCULES.
ADMETUS.	*Chorus of Thessalian Matrons.*
ALCESTIS.	DAUGHTER OF ADMETUS. } These do
EUMELUS.	MAIDENS OF ALCESTIS. } not speak.

SCENE.—*The Palace of Pheres in Pherae, the Capital of Thessaly.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

PHERES.

Pher. Unhappy father, thou dost trembling stand
In fearful anguish, and half dead, expecting
The answer of the Delphic oracle.
Irrevocably clear 'twill make to thee,
If in Fate's book 'tis written down that thou
Must be deprived of thy adored Admetus,
Thy only son.—Thou sov'reign Deity
Of Cirrha, O thou merciful Apollo,
If thou with thy divinity didst deign
Happy to make my palace, in whose bounds
Our flocks once had thee as their unknown shepherd;
If in so many ways with thy great favor
It pleased thee then to honor me, as thy
Unworthy host; give back, restored to health,
To a declining father his dear son,
Who in the very flow'r of life now pines

Upon the border of the darksome tomb!—
No more repose I find, or peace. To swell
My grief, I cannot venture to exhale
Into the breast of my dear agèd consort
All my deep woes: I with one blow should sever
The feeble thread of her existence, dared I
Unveil to her the fast approaching end
Of him our only son. By weight of years
Borne down, she never places now her foot
Outside her royal rooms: so hithérto
The sorrow that oppresses all Pheræ
To her remains unknown. But she must know it!
Thou only, noble and beloved companion
Of all my days, attachest me to life!
Were I not needful for thy life, I straightway
Should pray the Deities for death, to save
Admetus dear from Pluto . . . But, what see I?
Alcestis hastens hither! Is she first
To learn the answer of the oracle?

Scene II.

ALCESTIS, PHERES.

Alc. Dry up, O monarch, thy paternal tears:
Thou wilt not now be call'd upon to mourn
The death of thy dear son.
Pher. What do I hear!
O joy! Has then Apollo? . . . Is there hope? . . .
Alc. Yes, hope to thee, from the prophetic cave:
I would not yield the honor of such news
To any other; 'twas my lips alone
That should inform thee.
Pher. Tell me: will my son
Remain alive?
Alc. For thee, he will remain
Alive: of this I'm sure. Apollo says so;
Alcestis this repeats and swears.
Pher. O joy!
Thy spouse alive! . . .
Alc. 'Tis not sufficient reason
Why joy should rise again to-day inside
These sorrowing walls.

Pher. What? can there weeping be,
Admetus having ris'n again? Great Heavens!
Thou, who so dearly lov'st him, of his safety
Hearing, and bringing the glad news thyself
To a despairing father, hast thy cheeks
Dyed as with death? and to the sudden flash
Of a half joy on thy ingenuous brow,
Quickly succeeds, behind a darksome veil,
A troubled silence? Speak! . . .
Alc. The Deities
Themselves are subject to unchanging laws;
And never venture to infringe the dread
Decrees of Destiny. The Deities
Gave thee not little, when they gave Admetus.
Pher. Woman, thy look and acts, more than thy words,
Fill me with dread. Alas! explain the terms,
The terms, whose sad conditions make the life
Of thy adored Admetus of bad omen
To us, and also to thyself.
Alc. O father,
If the dark secret could remain unknown
To thee, if 'twere not told thee, I were silent
Till the fulfilment of the sacrifice:
But thou, alas! must hear it; hear it then
From me.
Pher. Thou mak'st a cruel piercing chill
Pervade my ev'ry fibre: I not only
A father am: but many mix'd affections
Contend within my heart: thou excellent
Daughter-in-law, I love thee more than daughter;
I love thy children, my grandchildren dear,
Their grandsire's vast delight and hope: and still,
After ten lustres, burns within my heart,
Pure and unchanged, my old and loving flame
For my inseparable consort dear.
Think, then, in what heart-rending agony
I stand, thy words expecting; well I see,
Ah, well I see that some of my own blood
Will suffer from the fatal augury.
Alc. Death of her rights to rob, e'en the Immortals
No pow'r possess. She, with her crooked hands,

Already stood, in act to seize Admetus,
Victim renown'd: Admetus, only heir
To Thessaly's fair kingdom: in the vigor
Of his full manly age; supremely happy
Here in the palace; by his noble parents,
His subjects, and the neighboring states adored,
And venerated: and, I need not say,
By his beloved Alcestis: such a prey
Insatiable Death already deem'd
She held; Apollo now has seized upon it;
Another (not his peer, he has no peer),
She in his place must have: this other prey
Must be of his own blood, or joined to him
By close adherence; and to Orcus go,
In free exchange for the restored Admetus.
Behold the terms on which he's saved.
Pher. What hear I?
Unhappy family! what victim? . . . who
Will now suffice? . . .
Alc. The sad exchange, O father,
Is made already. Ready is the prey;
Not all-unworthy of the saved Admetus.
O mighty Goddess of Avernus, thou,
Whose sacred image rises on this threshold,
Wilt not disdain this victim.
Pher. What! prepared
The victim is! great Heav'ns! and of our blood!
And thou didst in my presence say, O woman,
That I should now dry up my tears? . . .
Alc. I said so;
Again I say it; thou shalt not have cause
To mourn thy son; nor I to mourn my husband.
Admetus safe, no other lamentation
Can here be heard, at all to equal that
His death would have call'd forth. By some laments,
But short, and mingled likewise with some joy,
The victim for Admetus' life exchanged
Will honor'd be. The prey vow'd willingly,
And by an oath that never can be broken,
To the infernal Gods is —— I!
Pher. Great Heav'ns!

What hast thou done? didst think upon such terms
To save thy poor Admetus? Can he live
Without thee? of his very eyes art thou
The light: thou art his soul; thou'rt more beloved
By him than even his loved parents are;
Thou art more dear to him than his own children;
More dear to him than self. Ah, no! It must not,
It must not be! Alcestis, in the prime
Of beauty first to perish, then to kill
Not only thy own spouse, but all of us
Who love thee as a daughter? Void the palace,
The kingdom void, when thou art not. Hast thought, too,
Of thy two tender children? What will they
Without thee do? Thou mayst, with other heirs,
Make joyful all the land of Thessaly:
Thou art the fount of each domestic joy,
Thou of Admetus art the true and first
And only life. Thou shalt not die, I swear it,
As long as I can die. My head it is,
Which silently the oracle demands.
Yes, I it is, a frail and dried-up trunk,
Whose duty is to die for my dear son.
My many years, my hopes for ever dead,
My finish'd race, the pity of a father,
My pity, intermix'd with wonderment,
For a young woman, with celestial gifts
So richly deck'd; all these combined have sculptured
In adamant my death. Yes, thou must live!
Pheres commands it; never shall the love
Of a young wife be suffer'd to outvie
The gen'rous love of a fond ancient father.

Alc. Thy soul sublime, and thy immense and true
Affection as a father, well I knew:
And therefore I anticipated them.
But, Pheres, if I lent a silent ear
To all thy words, thou in thy turn art bound
To listen to my speech in perfect silence;
Fully convinced thou soon wilt be, and vainly
Wilt seek to combat me.

Pher. What canst thou say?
What can I hear? 'tis true I wish to save

Admetus: with thyself thou'lt lose him: I
Haste to the altars . . .
Alc. Stop! thou art too late.
Already Proserpine in her deep realms
Has heard my fearful oath; already she
Indissolubly has accepted it.
Fully assured am I that I must die,
And nothing now can change my fate. Do thou
Attend to what I say; and give consent,
Like a true father, to my firm resolve.
It was not female levity, nor any
Vain love of glory which impell'd me: 'twas
Reasons invincible. Now list. Still more
Than dear, yes sacred, is Admetus' blood
To me: his father, mother, and his children,
'Tis these that constitute Admetus' blood:
Now, which of these, instead of him, would Death
Take as her prey? dost think his son perchance?
He has not yet fulfill'd two lustres; though
In daring wanting not, his tender years
Allow him not to wish himself for death
Spontaneously: and if they did, could I,
His mother, bear it in my only son?
Still more 'twould be so with my younger daughter.
The agèd, ever-suff'ring mother's left;
The mirror of each lofty matron's virtue;
Ready, (I'm sure) did she but know, herself
In her son's place to give to Styx as victim:
But, tell me, thou who liv'st in her alone,
Would not thy life be instantly cut off
Were hers to end? Therefore on thee alone
Perforce had fall'n the terrible exchange,
If thou hadst been the first the Deity's
Dreadful response to hear. So 'twas my care
To be the first to hear it; I, who came
A stranger to this palace; a kind Fate
Has suffer'd me to be the one to save
The whole of this most precious stock at once.
Pher. Thou mak'st me weep: with wonderment immense
My soul thou fillest, and my very heart
In pieces thou dost rend. Great Heav'ns! . . .

Alc. Yes, weep
Over my fate; but, father, thou canst not,
And oughtest not to blame my high resolve.
The more my death may cost me, the more worthy
Admetus to redeem am I; to Pluto
I go approved the more. The will of Heaven
Was this most surely: I assume the care
Of proving it to my Admetus' self.
Already see I his despairing grief,
But fear not to confront it. Heav'n will give me
Sufficient strength: most palpable will I
My reasons make; I hope to prove to him
That his pure conjugal and mighty love,
If I possess'd it, was by me deserved.
To yield to Fate is needful: but to bow,
And not to let the mind be crush'd, the noble
Distinguishes from those of vulgar birth.
He in my courage must redouble his:
Him have I saved with parents and with children;
Alive, he loved me: dead, he'll honor me.

Pher. Dumb I remain, struck down to earth: I feel
Within my breast a noble envy, grief,
And a hard shame that's insupportable.
I'll do . . .

Alc. Do what may keep my memory
Here sacred, and assist me in my plans,
As thou shouldst do. Thou oughtst to save thy son,
And I my husband: this of both of us
The lofty duty is, the sole. And now once more
The fatal vow I in thy presence swear . . .
It moves to its fulfilment . . . Yes, already
I feel its sad effects. A fierce and burning
Fever now penetrates my mortal frame.
Doubt there is none: my vows has Pluto heard,
And bids me come; Admetus now is saved.

Pher. To him I'll hasten; he perchance . . .

Alc. To him
No one can go before me: I already
Have made access to him impossible.
'Tis I must cure him, and inform him of it;
And no one else. And thou, who so dost love
Thy noble consort, hasten to her side,

And the glad tidings of thy risen son,
Although she knew not he was sick to death,
To her convey.
Pher. We wretched . . .
Alc. Happy ones,
Who find again a son already lost.
Go then, I pray: in vain thine opposition;
I'm more than woman now. All fear be mute!
I of Admetus am the saviour: so
Let all obey me here.—Ye honor'd matrons
Of Pheræ, haste, and leave the palace walls,
And straight prepare a solemn sacrifice
In honor of great Proserpine: and sing
The proper hymn to that dread Deity,
Rearing the altar at the very foot
Of her proud image: soon will I return
To finish here the solemn rite, O women.

Scene III.

CHORUS, PHERES.

Pher. What courage! O what virtue! . . . What unknown
Conjugal love! . . . Unfortunate Admetus,
If at this price alone 'tis thine to live!

Scene IV.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

O Goddess of Avernus dread, attend
With kindness to our vows to thee;
If it indeed may be
That living voice of mortal prayer can wend
Beyond sad Acheron's ill-fated shore,
And down to thy dark realms descend:
With eyes with bitter weeping teeming o'er,
And trembling at Admetus' peril all,
Thy Deity with rev'rence we implore,
That thou wilt kindly deign to call
On never-sated, greedy Death to spare
A man so loved, of piety so rare.

Antistrophe.

Sole stay of his declining parents he;
And 'tis most probable that they,
To helpless grief a prey,
Swept from the book of living men would be:
Admetus, hope of Thessaly's fair land,
Who would with him extinguish'd see
Her happy state, and at one blow unmann'd
That pow'r in which she now securely lies;
Unless he first have train'd, to her command,
His children in sagacious wise:
Yes, indispensable is his control;
He and Alcestis have two frames, one soul.

Epode.

If thou near Etna's billowy strand one day
Wert taken, and thy captor did not seem
Hateful to thee, nor didst thou deem
Bitter the tenor of his ardent vows;
Thou whose compassion others' woes arouse,
Whose heart affection conjugal doth sway,
Of this fond loving and re-lovèd spouse,
Goddess, destroy not now the bliss, we pray!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

CHORUS, ADMETUS.

Chorus. What see I? can it be? Admetus comes
Hither with happy, free and lightsome step!
Just now he stood at death's own door, and yet
Is here so soon? . . . Admetus, may we trust
Our eyes?

Adm. Yes, women, so it is! made whole
Am I in body in one single moment;
But not in mind.

Chorus. What is the matter? why
Dost turn thy looks around in troubled fashion?

Adm. O tell me, where is my divine Alcestis?
I seek her ev'rywhere in vain.
Chorus. Just now,
Upon this sacred threshold of the palace,
She with loud voice invited us; and then
Commanded us to sing our hymns devout . . .
Adm. To Proserpine?
Chorus. Yes. She meanwhile directed
Her footsteps tow'rds her chamber actively;
Preparing for the sacrifice perchance,
Which she enjoin'd us to make ready here.
Adm. Go quickly on her traces; go: it may be
That in Apollo's chapel she devoutly
The due ablutions is performing now:
Ah, find her then, and let her hear from you
That I am whole, although with trembling fill'd,
And, at this fatal Goddess' feet bow'd down,
Await her here.

Scene II.

ADMETUS.

Adm. Alas! for whom did she
Bid them prepare a sacrifice?—Ah, hear me,
Avernus' potent Goddess; thou, who erst
Didst summon me in fearful tones, as one
Who was thy certain victim; quickly now,
If it so be that that late horrid vision
Which came to me is a reality,
Quickly take back again my feeble frame.
Upon such terms I cannot live. Behold,
I bow before thy image, with black crowns
Of fun'ral cypresses adorn'd so fitly:
Invoking thee, and praying thee to give me
Sooner a thousand deaths, than let me see
That vision e'er fulfill'd.

Scene III.

PHERES, ADMETUS.

Pher. I to this threshold
Of my belovèd son return once more,

Anxious and trembling: yet I cannot bear
Long to be absent from it. Those wild words
Wretched Alcestis utter'd, leave me not
One moment of repose. I will at least
Find out with my own eyes, if risen yet
From off his wearisome and fatal couch
Admetus is.
Adm.[1] Admetus? Who doth call me?
What see I? Heav'ns! thou, father?
Pher. Heav'n be praised!
Thy full recovery at least is true:
The instantaneous manner of thy cure
Prodigious also is. O my sweet son,
My only son, thee I embrace once more
Restored at length! and once again may I
In thee repose my ev'ry hope, the hope
Of the whole kingdom, and the hope of all.
Adm. Why speakest thou of hope? Ah, no! Thou see'st me
Restored in looks perchance, but more unhappy
A thousand times than in the lap of death,
As I so lately stood. A dreadful fear,
Surely not natural, has on me seized,
O father: and my ev'ry step, my words,
My thoughts, my terrors, my astonish'd soul
All agitated, and my sighs profound;
All this (thou see'st it well) points out the change
Of that foul mortal illness of the body
Into a new, and far more horrible
Sickness of mind.
Pher. I scarcely can refrain
From weeping.—Ah, my son; thou then hast seen
Alcestis, and from her hast learnt . . .
Adm. As yet
I have not seen her, since I've gazed again,
With eyes no longer glazed in death, upon
The sun's fair light. Each corner of the palace
I search'd as soon as I had risen, hoping
To find her, but in vain: at length I sent
Her faithful matrons, whom I met with here,

[1] Raising his head from the ground.

To search for her within; here I meanwhile
Am waiting for her. Ah, how many things
Have I to tell to thee, Alcestis dear,
All tremblingly! in thy celestial heart
Relief from all my passions shall I find:
'Tis thou alone who canst (if any may)
To calm restore my troubled spirits.
Pher. Heavens!
Unhappy son! . . . O hear me! do thy best
Some slight amount of quiet to restore,
Before thou see'st her, to thy still infirm
And agitated senses. When we're sick,
We scarce can comprehend a sudden, full
Return to health: thy raving probably
Comes from the long and sadly fever'd fibres
Of an excited brain.
Adm. Would it were true,
O father! but within my body ne'er
Dwelt there a more complete and perfect health,
Than that which dwells there now: I feel within me
Each pow'r of thought in as entire perfection,
As I have ever felt them. No, dear father,
I do not rave indeed: but that quick manner
In which I rose again, and then the vision,
So palpable and dread, which shortly follow'd,
Would have disturbance brought to ev'ry soul,
However sound and fearless.—Yes, immersed,
As thou dost know, in mortal lethargy,
But a few hours ago I lay. My eyes,
Heavy with Stygian clouds, could see no more:
My mind was shaded o'er, well-nigh destroy'd
Were all my senses; whereabouts I was,
Or amongst whom, I knew not. P'rhaps, just then,
My loving wife and my attendants faithful
Had left me for a little while, wrapt up
In seeming sleep, and I remain'd alone:
At least I think so; for, when I arose,
I found no being by my side. Meanwhile
I lay 'tween non-existence and existence,
When, far more burning than an earthly flame,
A sudden ray shot through me, and compell'd

My eyes to open. Lo, the sov'reign God,
Apollo, whom we once found so propitious,
That day when he consented in this palace
To show himself, no more as mortal shepherd,
But plainly as a glorious Deity:
So seem'd he now; in majesty divine
Approach'd he near my bed, and with a light
Celestial gesture 'neath my nostrils held
A gentle remedy of mighty power,
Miraculous, sweet-scented, and life-giving;
At the same time he over me extended
His kind right hand and cried: "Admetus, rise:
"Thy parents' prayers and those of thy rare spouse
"Are heard: now, live."—His words, the deed itself,
My cure, his disappearance, all were one.
Straight leap'd I from the bed: full of great joy,
Which took away my voice, I bow'd before
The God, who left behind him as he went
A splendid track of his immortal light,
Which rose up high in air. Then, the first thought
Which sprang up in my heart was to embrace
My dear Alcestis; for to me no joy,
Which I may straightway not divide with her,
Can be a joy.

Pher. Sacred Apollo! Thou
Sov'reign protector and true Deity!
The lofty promises I well remember,
Which thou at parting madest us.

Adm. But, father,
The whole as yet thou hast not heard: suspend
Thy votive prayers awhile.—I turn'd me round
Quickly, that I might go to seek my spouse;
When lo, in front of me, upon the threshold
Appear'd there, in a form of terror, Death.
Over my head her dreadful cutting scythe
Three times or four at least she threat'ningly
Did brandish; then, she cried in angry voice
Of thunder: "O Admetus! O Admetus!
"A God too pow'rful now has stolen thee
"Away from my unerring scythe awhile;
"But do not think to carry off the palm

" With joy from me. Yes, thou shalt live indeed:
" Vainly doth Phœbus try to break the laws
" Of changeless Destiny: yes, thou shalt live;
" But in such anguish, that thou'lt wish that thou
" Never wert born: a thousand times a day
" Thou wilt invoke me, who will deaf remain
" To all thy prayers, as thou wert deaf just now,
" Willing Apollo, to my menaces."—
She spake: and round me spread a sudden storm
Of darkest mist, and I was left half-dead,
And weeping bitterly. I slowly groped
My way along, that I might find the road
Out of the palace: then, as if pursued,
I hasten'd wildly on, I knew not whither,
Calling Alcestis; but she heard me not.
Here found I women; they a sacrifice
To Proserpine prepared: before her image
Prostrate I fell: all trembling now I stand.
What shall I hope? what fear? what say? what do?...
Ah, father, I indeed am wretched!
Pher. What,
What can I say?... What see I? Heav'ns! Alcestis?
O son! O son!

Scene IV.

ALCESTIS, PHERES, ADMETUS.

Alc. O happy I! Admetus,
The better portion of my soul, thou livest,
And art as whole as ever. This to us
Promised the Deities; let us return
Our thanks devout; and vie in venerating
Their high decrees, whatever they may be.
Adm. O Heav'ns! Are these, my spouse beloved, are these
The acts and words, which by thy love immense
Alone inspired are now, the day that I
To unexpected life return? I see thee ill,
Squalid in face, with sorrow in thy breast;
Uncertain in thy words; instead of rays
Of joy spread over thy ingenuous brow,

From eye to eye I see the furrows black
Of anguish most profound. Unhappy I!
What can I be, if, only just escaped
From death, I bring first to myself, and then
To those whom I love best, not happiness,
But certain grief? Alas! too true, I fear,
Too true will prove to be my terrors.
Alc. Father,
I little thought that I should find thee here,
Inside our threshold. Thou not long ago
Didst promise me that thou wouldst straightway go
To the sad aged mother of Admetus
And of myself, with the propitious news
Of her cured son consoling her.
Pher. Alcestis,
Thy words I understand: the news already
I've to my consort taken; I return there:
And leave thee with thy spouse. Silence meanwhile
Each doubt within thy breast: I could not have
The daring or the heart with him to' assume
Any of thy most sacred rights.
Adm. What means
The language that ye hold? . . .
Pher. Thou soon shalt know:
Soon shalt thou see me here again, dear son.

Scene V.

ADMETUS, ALCESTIS.

Adm. What doth this mean? I see that each of you
At my recov'ry is as much afflicted,
As ye were erst at my approaching death.
Alc. Admetus, of the Gods thou ever wert
A worshipper profound . . .
Adm. Still more than ever
I am so, since divine Apollo gave me
My life in such an obvious gift. Dear spouse,
Where wert thou then? why wert thou not beside me,
At that delightful moment, at a time
So supernatural and so tremendous?
When disappear'd my healing Deity,

Perchance the sight of thee had freed my mind
At once from ev'ry care: thou mightst perchance
Have from the cruel phantom rescued me
Which soon appear'd to me!
Alc. Dear husband, I
No consolation could have brought to thee,
And now I none can bring.
Adm. So be it then!
At last the mortal silence now may cease
Of all of you. I from thy lips would learn
That which is being by thine acts reveal'd,
And by this fatal dumbness. Matchless woman,
My spouse adored, Heav'n knows how much I love thee;
And if no other reason made me ask
For life, when with the love of thee compared:
With thee alone divided, its few blessings,
Its many sorrows can I e'er find sweet.
But how can I take pleasure in escaping
From death, when knowing that above my head
Some other cruel and unknown misfortune
Suspended is? And thou thyself dar'st not
Deny it. I am fill'd with dread; I fain
Would hear it, and I fear to hear.
Alc. Admetus,
'Tis written in the Fates that thou must live.
Thy life is sacred, and is needful, too,
For both thy aged parents; and for both
Thy tender children; for thy spacious kingdom;
For thy Thessalians all.
Adm. Alcestis, Heav'ns!
And dost thou reckon all, to whom my life
Is needful, save thyself? What do I see?
Do tears but ill repress'd at length break forth
Over thy pallid cheeks? a trembling wild
In fearful fashion shakes thy tongue and all
Thy members! . . .
Alc. Ah! no longer 'tis the time
To hold my peace: it is impossible
To hide from thee so terrible a secret;
From me alone thou ought'st to hear it. Ah!
Unhappy I! as I have had the force

And courage to fulfil my sacred duty,
O would that I were likewise better able
Its cruel issues to dissimulate!
But Nature still asserts imperious sway
Over her rights: alas! I am too much
A mother: and I was thy spouse . . .
Adm. What words! . . .
Alc. No longer can I say I am so still.
Adm. A mortal chill steals o'er my heart. No longer
Art thou my spouse?
Alc. I'm thine, for a few hours . . .
Adm. What meanest thou? who'll dare to take thee from me?
Alc. The Deities; who gave me to thee. I
Have sworn to them my willing death, to save thee
From death. Irrevocable Fate thus wills it.
Adm. Ah, merciless, mad woman! and from death
Hast thou saved me, thyself to death devóting?
Two at one blow hast thou destroy'd: our children
Thou, cruel one, hast robb'd of both their parents,
And thou a mother art?
Alc. I was a wife
Before a mother: less to them the loss,
If, rather than their father, me they lose.
Adm. And dost thou think it possible, Alcestis,
That I can thee survive?
Alc. All's possible
Unto the Gods: and they command thee so.
Have I to teach thee to obey, revere them,
Admetus, who deem'st piety a law?
They will'd thy sickness; then they placed in doubt
Thy very life; they gave thee presently
As 'twere a second life; and claim'd instead
To have some dear one as their victim: they
(How canst thou doubt it?) guided me, weak mother,
Me, loving spouse, to the great sacrifice
Of my existence, in the place of thine,
With hand invisible; yes, they alone.
Adm. The Deities? Ah, no! the Gods of Hell . . .
Alc. What dar'st thou say, alas! Within my heart
I feel a heav'n-sent indescribable

High daring, superhuman. Never may
My dear Admetus vanquish'd be by me
In manly courage, or in full and holy
Obedience unto Heav'n. Thou mayst suppose
How much it costs me thus to die: I see
Full well that it will cost thee far, far more,
To have thus to survive me. Let us both
Vie with each other,—for our children's love,
And for thy kingdom's glory and advantage,
And to bequeath a sacred monument
Of genuine piety,—in now electing,
The one to die, the other to survive,
Though each will thereby lose the dearest half
Of self. Thou dost not wish to give the lie
Unto my vows: nor couldst thou, didst thou wish.
Thy life no more depends upon thyself:
Sole master of it is that great Apollo,
Who has preserved it. I already see
His Deity, as though it were invoked
By what I say, infusing a mute tremor
Through thee: thou dar'st not answer: and in me
The mortal fever spreads incurable,
Still more and more.

Scene VI.

CHORUS, ALCESTIS, ADMETUS.

Alc. Ye have arrived in time,
O women: this unhappy one I leave
A few short moments in your charge, till I
Return: ye must not from his side depart
One single step. 'Tis needful that my children
Be with me when the fatal hour arrives:
I will return with them; and then remain.

CHORUS.

Strophe I.

What fatal favor has been pour'd
Upon Admetus' house by Heaven,
Since, though her spouse has been restored,
More mournful than before we see
Great Pelias' daughter so adored?

All from his presence, too, are driven;
In mournful posture he
Stands motionless, scarce draws his breath,
His bosom by a secret arrow riven:
This dread return to life appears to be
More sad to him than even death.

Antistrophe I.

The black and dreadful tempest raves
With fury, and on either hand
Flogg'd fiercely by the cruel waves
Is the wing'd bark of noble pine,
Which in its course each danger braves,
Hoping to reach the long-sought strand.
A Destiny divine
Let her not be the waters' prey:
But what avails it her to come to land,
If sails, yards, rudder, ev'ry sign
Of her late prowess have been swept away?

Strophe II.

Such is Admetus, who may now not die;
He does not therefore live, alas!
Because the Fates a perfect death deny.
The man who pines in misery
Not living is: he's but a pen of glass,
That writes on adamant, and then is broken
On the harsh whetstone of an adverse fate,
Whose stern decrees, when once they have been spoken,
No human pow'r can abrogate.
Admetus' grief is graven on his brow,
That hope in him is dead for ever now.

Antistrophe II.

O thou Latona's glorious son so fair,
Of Delos the great Deity,
If thou from out of Death's fierce claws didst tear,
With but one single look, the heir
Of a great family so dear to thee,

To whose devoted and untiring zeal
Thou, in thy bitter exile, when disguised
In shepherd's form, didst thy reward reveal;
Ah! he was not by thee thus prized,
That he might then in endless sorrow dwell:
Thou, who hast pow'r, his ev'ry grief dispel!

ACT III.

SCENE I.

ALCESTIS, *holding her son* EUMELUS *and her daughter by the hand, followed and supported by various maidens.* ADMETUS *apart, and* CHORUS.

Alc. My faithful maidens, here spread out my couch,
Before the feet of yonder sacred image
Of this dread Goddess: here must I myself
Her victim offer up. Meanwhile, my children,
Go ye together to your father: he
(Do ye not see?) stands mute and sorrowful,
And lonely there: but precious health once more
Revives in him, so far as he may have it,
And for your sakes he'll live. Now go, and wreathe
Your innocent and loving arms around
His neck.
Eum. My dearest father, is it true
That we again behold you raised to life?
O what great joy is ours!
Adm. Alas, no joy
Is left us now! Go, leave me; quick depart;
My grief is far too cruel: in the world
I know no more affection: know no more
That I'm a father.
Eum. Ah! What do I hear!
That we're no more thy children? Such strange words
I understand not. Clasp him tighter, sister;
Compel him to embrace us in return.
Adm. My children! . . . O my children! . . . O what arrows

Are in my heart your innocent soft words,
And kisses innocent! I'm no more equal
To such fierce torture. Yes, your gentle accents
Have pierced me through, and forcibly recall
The gentle sound of my Alcestis' voice.—
Alcestis, O Alcestis!—My dear spouse
The flow'r was of her sex: no woman e'er
Was by her consort loved, as she; yet she
Was the ungrateful, cruel, impious one,
Who would abandon husband and her children!—
My children, yes, 'tis she who fain would rob you
At the same time of both your parents dear.

Alc.[1] O agony! I hear the cruel words
Of desperate Admetus. 'Tis my duty,
Whate'er the cost, to hasten to his aid
With my remaining strength. O women, come;
Support me, and approach the hapless one,
That he may see and hear me.

Adm. Heav'ns! Alcestis?
See I thee still? and is it thou thyself
That comest to my succor? hear I thee
Whilst thou art dying? To thy couch return,
I pray thee: 'tis my duty there to stand
Beside thee, when thus weak.

Alc. All care of me
Is only vain: it certainly is right . . .

Adm. What voice! What looks! Those eyes, that now I see,
Buried beneath a death-portending mist,
Are they, alas! those once so beaming eyes,
That were my light, my comfort, and my life?
How dark the ray which now I shining see
On my bow'd head! how moribund the voice
That on my heart falls heavily! thou diest,
Too fond Alcestis; and for me thou diest!

Chorus. Behold the fatal secret! Now we know
The meaning of the divers fearful ravings
Of both of them.

Adm. Alcestis, didst thou raise
In thy compassion this my sinking head,

[1] Rising, supported, from her couch.

Now hanging down again, with the expiring
Last vital effort of thy fev'rish hand?—
Ah, from that deadly touch I feel already
My desp'rate fury waking once again,
And with redoubled strength. I gain my feet,
Run to the image of that greedy Goddess,
Who now awaits thy victim: there will I,
Before thou diest, immolate myself.

Alc. All fury is in vain: our children, these
Pheræan noble matrons, and these faithful
Maidens of ours, half-dead Alcestis too,
All stand here as a potent obstacle
To all thy cruel and insane designs.
Do ye oppose, my children, the wild movements
Of your poor father: and around his knees
Entwine yourselves, and hang upon him thus.

Adm. In vain each obstacle; in vain the will
Of Deities. I'm master of my days:
I am, and swear . . .

Alc. Thou once didst swear, Admetus,
For thy dear children's sake to live: to me
Thou swarest. Each irrev'rent fatal oath
Which thou mightst impiously attempt to make
Against the Deities' high will, in vain,
E'en if they wish'd it, would thy lips devout
Attempt to utter, by the Deities
Themselves chain'd down. Behold: while I am speaking
The Gods are lending strength: and they command
Sublime endurance on thy part, transfused
Through me to thee: surrender to their will.
Come; calm thyself; assist me; and become,
As is thy duty, my sweet comforter
In that last stage to which I now draw nigh:
But at this fatal time inflict not on me
A martyrdom that is far worse than death.
Accompany me now, O faithful one!

Chorus. What pow'r is in her words! Admetus' fury
At the sweet charm of the celestial accents
Of her now dying, falls.

Alc. No more resists he
The arrows which are wing'd by reason true.

Women, return we now with paces slow
To where my couch expects me.
Chorus. Thou, too, come,
Admetus, to her side. Meanwhile, who knows
Whether the Gods have not thus will'd it all,
Solely in order to the proof to put
Your courage and your love and piety?
No, we as yet do not esteem all hope
As dead.
Alc. Admetus, sculptured in thy face
Full well I read the words which thy wild sobs
So deep forbid thy lips to speak. I, too,
With difficulty speak; but it is needful
That thou shouldst bear impress'd upon thy heart,
Until the tomb, my final words. Now, hear them;
Pregnant with conjugal, maternal love,
They may be grievous, but they vital are.
Neither in words, nor even in my thoughts,
Will I insult thee with the supposition
That thou wilt ever as a spouse extend
To any other woman thy right hand.
No, thou, Admetus, never wouldst inflict
On these our dearly-loved and common children
A stepmother: unworthy were indeed
Such a suspicion of our love immense.
Ah, this is not the fear which now I feel
In leaving thee. My only fear is this:
That thou, too obstinate and too immersed
In wicked sorrow, to thy children's hurt,
And to the hurt of kingdom and thyself,
Mayst seek to rob them all of all the fruit
Of my emprise, or by neglecting, or
By short'ning e'en thy days. But these shall be
Thy curb. Behold, I place within thy hand
This thy and my dear daughter; lasting image
Of her true mother, keep her by thy side,
Live for her sake: in thy default, remember
None will remain who at the fitting time
A worthy spouse can choose for her. And this
Our graceful only heir, this hope of all
The realms of Thessaly, in thy default

Who can instruct him how to govern well,
And furnish him with help and proud example?

Scene II.

Pheres, Alcestis, Admetus, Chorus, *and the children of Admetus.*

Alc. Come now, O father; join thyself to us;
Gaze on thy hapless son, who now has lost
Voice, senses, strength. It is for him I tremble,
And yet I needs must leave him. At his side
Do thou stand ever, as a close observer
Of all his movements.—I am silent: all
My sacrifice is well-nigh perfected.

Pher. My son, embrace me: to thy father turn
Thy looks, I pray.

Adm. My father? art thou he?

Pher. O Heav'ns! what hear I! art not thou a father?

Adm. I was; but am no longer one: the sight
Of my late children gives me pain: thy sight,
O Pheres, causes rather wrath than sorrow.

Pher. Dost thou address me thus? and call me not
E'en by the name of father?

Alc. Ah, what strange
Unnatural accents from Admetus' lips
Do I now hear!

Adm. Those accents are my own,
And just ones too, to which I utt'rance gave.
O Pheres, art not thou the only cause,
The wicked cause of all my dreadful loss?
Thou sentest, all against my will, to Delphi
The oracle to seek by force; whilst I,
As if I then divined the fatal gift
The Gods intended me, did all I could
In order to prevent what they decreed
Coming to light. I, conquer'd then by illness,
Resign'd to destiny, and from myself
Divided in great part, was swiftly going
Into the tomb, without perceiving it;
Why didst thou draw me out? . . .

Pher. Dost thou then deem
My love paternal as a crime, forsooth?
In this did I offend thee? Son! could I
In the full vigor of thy years behold thee
Perish, and not attempt by ev'ry means,
Both human and celestial, to preserve thee?
Adm. Hast, with thy cruel oracle, then saved me?
Am I not still condemn'd to die? my death
Far more unmerciful and terrible
Will be. But, tell me how it was that, when
From Delphi that ill-omen'd answer came,
It was the greedy ears of my Alcestis,
Rather than thine, which were the first to hear it?
Why, if a willing victim in my place
Must needs be offer'd up to Orcus dread,
Why wert not thou the first, the only one,
As thou dost boast of thy excessive love
For me, thy only son, why wert not thou
Ready with thy own life to ransom me
From death?
Alc. My husband, canst thou venture now
Thus to degrade thyself with such wild talk?
Art thou o'erflowing with a wicked anger
Against thy father? dost thou dare to ask,
Nay, harshly to demand the death of him
Who brought thee into being?
Pher. Son, though bitter,
I find thy reprimand not altogether
Unjust: although thou dost not fully know
That which is to Alcestis known too well.
She can explain, how many and what arts
She practised to delude me, and to rob me
Of the great privilege of dying for thee.
Alc. He speaks the truth, Admetus. I it was,
Who first did intercept the oracle:
I then all means of its accomplishment
Pre-occupied with skill: it was too clear
To me that such a gen'rous sacrifice
Was mine to make, and I assumed it then:
All love gives way to that of spouse. The moment,
In which thou knew'st that one of us must go

As an exchange to Styx, in place of thee,
That very moment heard my solemn oath
To go to Styx for thee. Thenceforth thy safety
Was in my hand; I never ask'd from others
That which I could, and wish'd, and ought myself.
Pher. Thou shalt not hear me make a boast, Admetus,
Of greater virtue than I ought to claim.
How great the love for thee that fills my breast,
My only son, without my telling thee,
Thou knowest well; 'tis told thee by the sceptre,
Which I before the time to thee made over
In green old age. By my own hand my power
Annihilated was, to make thee king,
Whilst still I lived, of Thessaly and me.
This was a proof, believe me, which naught else
Could equal; I repent not; I'm content
When by thy subjects thee I see adored.
When thus the king in me the father vanquish'd,
My glory all became wrapp'd up in thine.
Laying aside each thought of vain ambition,
I lived a happy private life beside
My consort. Here I'll not deny, nor blush
In telling thee, how sweet has been to me
The life which I have for so many years
Divided with a woman so beloved,
Thy venerable and most noble mother:
She is the mirror of my soul; for her
I live; and in her live.
Chorus. O what pure heart!
What virtue!
Pher. O Admetus, that same love,
Which desperately now has driven thee
To outrage thus thy father; that same love
Felt by a husband, and in me not dimm'd
By weight of years, perchance would have deprived me
Of that sublime devotion, which has made
Alcestis over each male breast to triumph.
To die for thee I maybe had not courage,
If I must leave my wife: but, if two victims,
Instead of one, had to be offer'd up
To Pluto; had my failing loving wife

Been call'd upon to die a natural death:
In such a case I had not hesitated
To follow her one moment, being freed
From all the ties which fasten'd me to life.
It would have been far different if I
Had had now to abandon to herself,
And to a solitary sad old age,
My dear companion of so many lustres,
At such an age, in such weak health. O Heavens!
A dreadful chill runs through my ev'ry vein,
At the mere thought of this. And yet, to save thee,
My dearest son (if I the oracle
Had learnt before her) I had freely given,
Even at such a price immense as this,
My life for thine: I Heav'n invoke as witness;
And thy Alcestis I invoke, who learnt
The oracle before me, and discover'd
The truthful meaning of my grief.

Alc. 'Twas I,
(And with what art!) 'twas I alone deceived him,
And would not let him die.

Adm. O spouse! O father!
It was not needful for thee, no, to utter
So many and such burning words of passion,
With which thou in a thousand fearful ways
Hast pierced my heart, to make me stand before thee,
Full of deep shame and terrible remorse,
And inexpressible excessive grief.
If thee I outraged, I had lost my senses,
Through anguish wild.—Alcestis! O Alcestis!
How often shall I call thee, and in vain!

Alc. Father, and husband, names beloved, I soon
Must leave you, and for ever. Laws to you
Be these my words which nothing breathe but peace,
The last that I shall utter here. In thee,
Pheres, as in a mirror clear, shone forth
Through all thy words the speechless purity
And sacred sweetness of the fond affections
Of father and of husband; thou, Admetus,
Father and husband art, but son as well;
Let both thy parents ever be to thee

Sacred; and thy right hand shall be my pledge,
That thou wilt for our children live. And now
Receive from her who is thy spouse adored
The last embrace.
Adm. And in that last embrace
Is't possible that I shall not expire? . . .
Alc. Kind women, now remove with gentle force
This hapless one from me; and with him take
These tender children. Children, fare ye well!—
And now is all fulfill'd. Be it thy care,
Pheres, to watch o'er my unhappy spouse,
And never to abandon him.
Eum.[1] Dear mother,
Dost thou abandon us? dost part us from thee?
Pher. Our tears have robb'd us of all pow'r of speech.
Alas! Admetus, more half-dead than she,
Has lost his senses utterly. O women,
Farther away let's drag him; altogether
Out of Alcestis' sight.
Alc. O ye, my faithful
Attendants, render me, I pray, your last
And pious offices: these torpid limbs
Compose in quiet modest attitude
For my approaching death . . .
The Chorus of Alcestis. She scarce can utter
Her fev'rish accents! Ah, 'tis well-nigh over!

CHORUS.

The Chorus of Alcestis.[2]

Strophe I.

Mutely, resignedly
Now let us grieve:
Woe, if that wretched one
E'er should perceive
How bitterly we sigh!

[1] Turning round towards her.

[2] The Chorus is divided into two parts, one half surrounding Alcestis, whilst the other draws aside around Admetus. They then sing separately in turns. The Chorus of Alcestis sings its Strophe I. *sotto voce:* then the Chorus of Admetus its Strophe II.; and so on until the end of Epode II.

Antistrophe I.

Quick, friend, her sinking head
Gently repose;
Thou, too, her dying eyes
Tenderly close:
Still sweet, though death so nigh.

Epode I.

How long she vainly pants for breath,
Before the fight is done,
Before the victory's won
O'er life by cruel death!
O Death, complete
Thy work! quick come,
And end the martyrdom
Of her the sweet
Celestial brave Alcestis,
Who of all mortals best is,
And should not die.

CHORUS.

The Chorus of Admetus.

Strophe II.

'Tis not sufficient here to stand,
And hide from him the dread catastrophe,
By circling him with our light band,
While motionless and mute remaineth he:
His hearing we must cheat as well.

Antistrophe II.

Hope never can be wholly dead,
For those who reverence the Gods above;
Its comforts Heav'n will ofttimes shed
On him who mourns with pure, submissive love:
Tow'rd Heav'n let our loud chorus swell.

Epode II.

O pray then, pray! O pray!
What else can mortals do, all born to weeping,
O'er whom the iron Fates their watch are keeping?
O Jove, great Jove!

Thou ruler of the universe,
O do not utterly immerse
In sorrow's sea this man to-day,
Who doth not move
Or eye or foot;
This son, whose sole pursuit
Is to revere his father and obey.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

ALCESTIS, *surrounded by her maidens, and by part of the* CHORUS: ADMETUS, *on the opposite side, surrounded by* PHERES, EUMELUS, *his daughter, and the other part of the* CHORUS. *At the end of the lyric Chorus,* HERCULES *advances on the stage.*

The Chorus of Alcestis. Who is this lofty hero who now comes,
Of superhuman looks? It is indeed
Alcmena's gen'rous son; within this palace
Seen by us a few years ago. O noble
Offspring of Jove, what cause has led thee now
To turn thy steps at such a time tow'rds this
Unhappy threshold?
Herc. Hearing the bad news,
My course I alter'd, and I hither came.
Admetus was a prey to mortal illness,
I heard, and hast'ning to the tomb: how sweet,
And yet how sad, will be to me the sight
Of my illustrious friend! But say, have I
Not come in time?
The Chorus of Alcestis. Alas! thou know'st not all.
Admetus lives, and whole in body. Heavens! . . .
But his adored Alcestis in his place
Dies of her own accord. Behold her: she
This moment breathes her latest breath . . .
Herc. Sad sight!
What is't ye tell me, women? O sublime

Unequall'd wife! O thou of men most wretched,
Admetus! But where is he? I would see him . . .
The Chorus of Alcestis. Ah, no! attempt not farther to proceed:
There stands Admetus, reft of all his senses,
And well-nigh dead, surrounded by his children:
Pheres, his father, to his side alone
Draws near with tears: only by force just now
With difficulty dragg'd he him away
From off the neck of his expiring wife;
Wert thou to wake him from his lethargy,
'Twould be the worse; e'en thou wouldst have no power
To comfort him.
Herc. Who knows?—Meanwhile 'tis vain
To linger here. Alcestis still, methinks,
Is living.
The Chorus of Alcestis. Yes, the very slightest breath
Which scarce would cause a moment's flickering
In the thin flame of a small taper, issues
Out of her dying lips from time to time.
But, ev'ry sense has fled, and both her eyes
Are nearly closed; and through her ev'ry limb
Already creeps a torpor chill . . .
Herc. Enough
That I have seen her on this side the waves
Of Styx; from whence there's no return. Do ye,
O faithful women, silently at once
Convey her in the hottest haste along
The most secluded road, inside the great
Temple of Mercury and of Apollo.
There, to that sacred ancient prophetess
Entrust her in my name; let each of you
Hither return directly afterwards;
And woe if, ere I hither come myself,
Any of you attempt to tell the tale
To sad Admetus. Quickly go, and be
So silent, that the band around Admetus,
Buried in its own grief, may be unable,
Either to see or hear you. And, O women,
Dread ye the anger of my mighty father,
Great Jove, as well as my fierce indignation,

If to the very letter ye fulfil not
These my commands both wisely and discreetly.

Scene II.

Hercules, Pheres, Admetus, *the children of Admetus, and part of the* Chorus.

Herc.[1] I have good hopes: if but just Heav'n will deign
To smile upon my vows. But now at length
Out of our sight has pass'd away the sad
Procession which I bade accompany
The half-dead body. This is just the time,
When I may venture briefly to address
Unfortunate Admetus.—Will ye give
To an old guest admission?
The Chorus of Admetus. Hercules!
Pher. What see I? Heav'ns!
Herc. Admetus! O Admetus!
I pray thee, raise thy head: thine eyes re-open,
And look upon a true and loving friend,
Who, hearing of thy illness, straightway turn'd
Tow'rds thee his steps. What? not one single sign
Of a live man? dost welcome thus Alcides?
Adm. Who of Alcides spoke? That voice! . . O Heav'ns!
Do I see rightly? Faithful Hercules,
Was it thy lips that call'd me then?—Am I
Awake, or do I rave?
Herc. Thou see'st the truth:
I'm Hercules, and reach thee just in time.
Adm. What say'st thou? Ah, thou art too late! extinct
For ever is my happiness . . .
Herc. Cheer up!
Narrate me nothing; all I know: believe me,
All hope is not yet dead: thou art the friend
Of Hercules: his friends, the Deities;
A certain God as well, who urged me hither.
So I command thee; hope.
Adm. What words! what joy!
Can it indeed be so? . . . Can my Alcestis

[1] Aside.

From cruel Pluto ransom'd be? . . . I feel
A vital fire throughout my frozen veins
Kindled anew at thy glad words.—What say I?
Unhappy I! too vain and flatt'ring is
The fond deceit! A dread, eternal Fate,
Who could e'er break? not Jove himself . . .
Herc. To me
Avernus' roads are known; thou know'st it well:
But I must now no longer tarry here;
Yet soon, Admetus, thou once more shalt see me,
And on this threshold. I will say no more.
Strictly do I enjoin thee, not one step
To move outside the limits of this threshold,
Until I have return'd: thou must not move
Thy feet to enter further in the palace,
Or to proceed outside. Ere very long,
And in this very place, I'll bring to thee
What comfort, scarce I know; but not a light one.
Adm. Great hero, suffer me at least to bow
Before thy superhuman valor first:
My heart hast thou with courage fill'd . . .
Herc. Thou soon
Shalt find a time for venting thy emotions.—
Pheres, thou best of sires, do thou meanwhile,
And ye, Pheræan matrons, by his side
All stand. I go: I trust him to you all.

Scene III.

Pherès, Admetus *with his children, and part of the* Chorus.

Pher. Dost see now, son belovèd, dost thou seé,
How, if a man with pureness lives 'mongst mortals,
The Deities religiously observing,
He finds them as his friends in case of need?
And, when he least expects it, sees a truce
Or remedy arise for all his ills?
Adm. In truth, to my intense and cureless grief
The accents of great Hercules appear'd
To give a little truce; as did the sight
Of his calm brow, on action so resolved.
Alcestis therefore is in no worse case

Than she was just before. O Death, hast thou
Suspended for a time thy fierce assaults?
Come, then, unloose the circle which ye made
In kindness round my body; tow'rds her open
A fresh access; at any rate once more
Let me behold her. Children, let us come,
Once more approaching her whom we adore.—
What do I see? what dreadful lonely void
Is form'd there now? Is yonder not the image
Of the dread Goddess of Avernus? lately
Alcestis lay upon her bed of death
Before its lofty base, her women round her:
Where are they now? where is the bed? O Heavens!
Alcestis disappear'd! . . .

Pher. What can have happen'd?

The Chorus of Admetus. Our women vanish'd with her!

Adm. O Alcestis!
Alcestis, where art thou?

Pher. With wonderment
I see the place deserted.

Adm. Be your stupor
Or true or feign'd, yet your uncertain words,
The pallor of your faces, and your tears,
Too ill, alas! repress'd, your ev'ry act,
Annihilate each hope I had conceived,
And plunge them back in everlasting night.
Alcestis lives no longer.—O Alcides,
Couldst thou thus turn my grief to ridicule?
Just at the moment when my joy in life
Was quench'd for ever, didst thou flatter me
With feign'd emotions? Madness! and did ye,
Ye also join with him in cheating me?
Where is she, where? I needs must see her: dead,
Or living, I must see her: O Alcestis,
I would precipitate myself upon
Thy much-loved body, and there breathe my last.

Pher. Be calm, I pray thee; hear me; soon we'll know
The truth; but I do not believe her dead.

The Chorus of Admetus. Lo, our companions swiftly hasten back.
Thou shalt know all.

SCENE IV.

THE CHORUS OF ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, PHERES, *the children, and* THE CHORUS OF ADMETUS.

Adm. Whence come ye, O ye women?
Where go ye now? Where is Alcestis? I
Demand her of you, I would see her. Well, . . .
What see I? ye are troubled; pale, and mute,
And trembling . . . Ah, unhappy I! the truth
I see too well: extinguish'd is my life:
All is now over. But ye must not think
Her much-loved body to withdraw from out
My sight, as long as I this hateful light
Must bear: I'll go and find it . . .
Pher. Ah, my son!
Dost not remember, that Alcides bade thee
Not to set foot outside the palace bounds,
But to await him here?
The Chorus of Admetus. While us he bade
To stand beside thee, and prevent thee . . .
Adm. Vainly,
Vainly do ye, whoe'er and what ye be,
Ye cruel, weak, and also vulgar friends,
Conspire against me all. Far different
Is my deep grief, than all the useless chill
Of your fallacious arguments. My deeds
Are not the deeds of one insane; my firm
And perfect will, my desperation fierce,
Daughter invincible of reasoning sense,
These now impose upon me the decided
Resolve irrevocable, from the which
Nor ye, nor time, nor all Olympus' Gods,
Nor those of the Abyss, shall e'er divert me.
Women, once more I say it; I demand
My consort's body.
The Chorus of Alcestis. Thou nor canst nor oughtst
To see her now: but we may swear to thee,
That she was still alive . . .
Adm. O ye as perjured
As ye are foolish, for what purpose use
Words thus confused? In vain would ye deceive me.
Did I not see her on this fatal spot

Not long ago with scarce a breath of life?
And on mine ears are there not sounding still
The frail last accents of her dying voice?
Thou, father, didst remove me forcibly
From her dear neck. Unhappy I! and I
Shall see her ne'er again? Those terrible
And yet sweet words of hers that I then heard,
Were they indeed her last?
Pher. My only son,
Beloved Admetus, open, I entreat thee,
Thy mind to reason. Hercules in short . . .
Adm. Deceitful friend, to me gave Hercules
The final blow.—But he indeed spoke true,
In saying that I must not leave this spot:
Here will I stay for ever. How could I
Advance my foot inside? No, never, no,
Within these mute and mournful thresholds, where
I lived so happily with her, nor envied
The Deities themselves, the lover loved
Of my Alcestis; no, within these thresholds,
Alive I ne'er will enter more. Ere long
I'll go from here, and loudly call upon
Thy name adored: but as for that ill-omen'd
Sad nuptial couch, which erst received us both,
I'll never see it more, nor that dear seat
On which it was thy wont to sit . . . Sad sight!
Deserted now . . . Here didst thou die, Alcestis:
And here, too, I must breathe my last; and shortly,
I swear it.
Pher. Say not so: thou hast already
Tacitly promised to Alcestis' self,
That thou wilt for thy children live.
Adm. Dear children!
My and Alcestis' children, come ye both
Into my arms, and for the last time too.
Thou, little maiden, come; that the last kisses
Be fixed on thee of father and of husband.
The living mirror of thy darling mother
Thou art, too much so. O rare forms! O ye,
Who nourish'd in your breasts esteem and love
And wonder for the goodness and the beauty
Of that incomparable woman; ye

Who may survive her, let it be your care
That for the world her form divine be kept
Intact; let workmen skill'd immortalize her
In painting and in marble and in bronze;
So that to our remote posterity
The image of such virtue in such beauty
May, as though living, pass.
Eum. Ah! shall not we
Ever again behold her?
Adm. O sad words!
Quick, from my side these wretched orphan children
Remove ye: I no more can look upon them.
O Death, do thou haste on; O Death, haste on
Thy second slaughter. Dead Alcestis is;
And lives Admetus? . . . Who'll a sword deny me?
A sword I'll have. In vain do ye surround me;
In vain ye seek to check me.
Pher. And in vain
Thou hopest to grow fierce against thyself.
We are too many; thou'rt alone, unarm'd;
And now against thyself will we defend thee.
And, ere thou slay thyself, I swear that thou
Shalt slay thy father.
Adm. Do ye then expect
Alive to keep me, in my own despite?
Full many a thousand ways there are of dying;
But I will not attempt them furtively.
And now I choose you as the witnesses
Of my immutable and last decision.—
To both celestial and infernal Gods
I swear, that from this time no food, no drop
Of simple water shall in any shape
Enter my mouth in order to sustain
My body. 'Tis as possible that I
Irreverently may an oath like this
Infringe henceforth, as that Alcestis' self,
Breaking the laws of an eternal Fate,
From black Avernus may return, to see
Once more the sun's fair light.—Ye hear? I'm now
Sure of myself, and calm. Ye cruel friends,
Ye now may at your will with cheating pity
Restrain me, and oppress, and banter me,

And even not permit me to behold
The sigh'd-for body: I am now, like her,
Among the dead. And thou, if e'er thou lov'dst me,
Father, do thou enclose my lifeless form
In the same sepulchre as the remains
Of my Alcestis.—Here I end my speech.
Henceforth no sigh, no movement, and no sign
From me shall issue.
Pher. O my son! my son! . . .
His strength deserts him . . .
Chorus. Women, with our hymns
Let us revive in him religious hope.

CHORUS.

Monostrophe.

Almighty is the Ruler of the skies;
All things he knows, he governs all the world
With his divine all-piercing eyes.
Never by chance, and ne'er in vain
The lightnings of immortal will are hurl'd.
Despising not the human form, 'twas he
Who in Alcmena's womb did deign
His great club-bearing son to fashion,
The brave Alcides, who upon the strong
(Inflamed by heav'nly passion)
So wreak'd his wrath, that all the hostile throng
Were vanquish'd ignominiously.
Antæus found out this, the giant proud;
And Cygnus, son of Mars, a warrior bold;
And Mars himself, and all the crowd
Of Hydras, Geryŏns, and Chimæras dread,
Monsters whose blood he shed,
Whose spoils he took in numbers manifold.
Ne'er would so great a mortal deign,—
Who always acts, and never boasts withal,—
To bid us hope by chance, or hope in vain.
Trembling and mute, let all
Now prostrate fall;
Almighty is the Ruler of the skies;
All things he knows, he governs all the world
With his divine all-piercing eyes.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CHORUS; ADMETUS, *lying motionless under the statue of Proserpine;* PHERES; *the children of Admetus;* HERCULES, *with a veiled woman, whom he leaves on one side, advancing then alone.*

Pher.[1] Women, be silent; lo, Alcides comes
As loyal as magnanimous.
Chorus. Behind
His hasty steps, there follows him afar
With steps irresolute a woman veil'd
Of lofty bearing.
Pher.[2] Come, thou mighty hero!
Do thou (for thou alone art able) save
Thy friend despairing from a dreadful death.
The Chorus of Alcestis. How cruel the command that thou didst give us,
Thou Hercules invincible! we bore
The half-dead body out of sight of all;
Then faithfully, but trembling and uncertain
As to Alcestis' fate, refused the king
News of our act; our silence, or our words
Broken and doubtful, with repeated blows
So plunged the dagger in Admetus' heart,
That by the Gods celestial and infernal
He swore . . .
Herc. O women, the just Deities
Neither accept nor listen to the oaths
Of a despairing man. I hither come
From ev'ry oath whatever to release him.—
True to my promise, I return, Admetus;
Behold me, rise!—But what is this? he seems
To hear me not.
Pher. O Heav'ns! The wicked plan
Has he resolved on, not to give fresh signs
Of life.
Herc. A grief that's worthy of a king,

[1] Seeing Hercules. [2] Meeting him.

Admetus, show; not more. Wouldst thou appear
Vanquish'd, like common men? Of Hercules
The friend, learn thou to emulate his feelings.
Adm. Silence to keep at such a man's reproaches
Were cowardice. Thou knowest, Hercules,
That vulgar feelings ne'er took root in me.
But do thou pray thy glorious father, pray
With all thy might, that thou mayst never know
The cruel grief of a bereavèd lover.
It is a labor, 'neath whose weight the soul
Is crush'd, beyond Herculean trials e'en.
Thou see'st me for approaching death prepared,
And worthy of thy friendship. Do thou then
For the last time extend a friendly hand:
The final pledge I ask of thee, Alcides,
Of our most sacred friendship, is the body,
The much-loved body of that dear one . . . Vainly
Hast thou withdrawn it from my sight already:
The sight of her could not increase my grief . . .
Give orders, then, to bring her back: I fain
Would see her, and then die . . .
Herc. On my return,
I promised I would bring thee some sweet comfort,
And not a light one; such is what I bring;
'Tis certainly not less than any other
That thou couldst dare to hope for. Of one fond
Adored companion thou art robb'd by Fate:
Now by my hand does the same Fate another
Companion give to thee, and bid thee take her.
Adm. What dar'st thou say, Alcides?
Herc. There she is.
Approach, thou noble woman! Underneath
That veil a wondrous beauty is conceal'd:
And far more beauteous is the soul that's hidden
Beneath her raiment fair: a heart that's pure,
An intellect sublime; a humble manner,
With regal blood: each quality in short,
That Heav'n in woman e'er enclosed: all these
In her thou'lt find who is Alcestis' equal.
Adm. A woman like Alcestis? Must I hear
Such sacrilegious words?—Alcides, hear me.

If I in thee have over venerated
The' illustrious son of Jove; if I in thee
With so much love, and reverence, received
The friend, the hero; shouldst thou therefore scorn,
And laugh at me, a sad despairing lover?
Do railleries like these at such a time
Become so great a hero?
Pher. Son, dost not
Respect the Deities' interpreter?
Adm. If to the Deities Admetus ne'er
Wicked appear'd or vile, why keep they him
Alive at such a great and dreadful cost?
Or else, if I of an untimely death
Deserving was, why for my life were they
Willing to take the life of my Alcestis?
To slay us both.—The Deities' resolve
May be fulfill'd; provided that I die.
Herc. Approach him boldly, woman; and compel him
To rectify his error; make him feel
At once the mighty influence of Alcides,
And of the Gods.
Adm. Arrest thy daring foot,
Whoe'er thou be. How cruel is the outrage,
How insupportable, that thou inflictest
Upon me by thy presence! One Alcestis,
One only, was there on the earth 'mongst mortals:
She was, O Heav'ns! and is no more . . . But, if
The Deities were willing to create
For me her equal and her like, she only,
My first one, should be mine; no other one
Should stand beside me . . . Heav'ns! what do I say?
At the mere thought I shudder. Go ye, then,
Go all away, I pray! How can it please you
My last thoughts in this manner to disturb?
With thee, with thee, Alcestis, would I spend
The few remaining moments of my life,
Until my oath has been fulfill'd.
Herc. But what,
What is the impious oath that he has sworn?
Pher. O Heav'ns! whilst we were lately taking from him
All means of injuring himself, he swore,

In accents terrible and yet determined,
(Compelling us to act as witnesses,)
He swore by all the Deities celestial,
As well as those of Hell: that from that time
No single drop of common water e'en
Should ever pass his lips again: and added:
It is as possible that I should break
My oath, as that Alcestis should return
To life again.

Herc. Thy oath, then, O Admetus,
Has been fulfill'd: this one has loosed thee from it.
Behold her; see! this is the live Alcestis.[1]

Adm. What see I? Heav'ns!

Pher. What strange illusion this! . . .

Chorus. Fresh terror! How from Pluto's cloisters dark
Could she escape so soon? . . .

Adm. She stands all mute
And motionless; it is her shade, not she!

Herc. Let now all doubt, and wonderment, and terror
Within you cease: this is the true, the only,
The live Alcestis, not Alcestis' shade:
She from the Deities obtain'd the favor,
Before she to the ritual bath was taken,
Not only of embracing thee, Admetus,
But of addressing thee.

Alc. Dear spouse, Admetus,
Heav'n reunites us, and for long to come.

Adm. Ah, 'tis the sweet, the voice adorable
Of my Alcestis; she it is who draws me
Out of the tomb. Alcestis, do I then
Once more embrace thee in my arms? Let Death
Now come.

Herc. That fatal Deity is driven
In a long banishment outside this palace.

Alc. Many and happy years we'll pass together,
Parents and children: Hercules adore,
The superhuman means of such a wonder.

Adm. Shining in thee a Demigod I see:
Let me bow down . . .

[1] Unveils her.

Herc. Arise: I am no more
Than mortal; by the Deities beloved.
Adm. O Heav'ns! I'm mute through my excessive joy.
I scarce can trust my eyes: and yet these hands
That I am clasping, are indeed thy dear
True hands, O my Alcestis: and those living
Accents divine to which I listen'd, came
In very truth from out thy lips adored.
Alc. And yet, my spouse, not long ago I heard
The words despairing of thy mighty grief,
When thou didst think me dead! O what a secret
Joy indescribable, when thee I saw
So full of me, whilst utterly cut off
From ev'ry hope of me! Too much thou lov'st me,
And this is proved by thy most dreadful oath. —
Nothing remains, but to embrace our children,
And thank the Deities in solemn wise.
Pher. Come then, ye little children, to the breasts
Of both your parents, now restored to you.
Eum. Mother, and we were weeping so! O Heavens!
I never thought again to see thee.
Herc. Ne'er
Saw I a spectacle more glad than this,
More full of tenderness. I feel that tears
As sweet as unaccustom'd force their way
Into my eyes.
Pher. And what will be the joy
Of thy dear agèd mother, O Admetus,
In seeing thee again to-day!
Chorus. The Gods
Have shown in thee their pow'r.
Herc. 'Twas all the work
Of the Celestials. Them it pleased, Admetus,
That thou shouldst unto death be sick, that thus
Free course might to Alcestis' noble virtue
Be given; and it also pleased the Gods
That thou, believing she was dead, shouldst show
Thy love immense by that most fearful oath
That thou wouldst not survive her.
Adm. Tell me how
Thou wert permitted her to extricate
From Orcus' greedy jaws?

Herc. All those are secrets
Of a supreme Omnipotence, in which
All prying by mere human wit would be
As futile as foolhardy. Yes, Alcides
Was, in this prodigy, the tool submissive
Of the dread Deities' commands; nought else.
I may not speak of it; and ye may not
Seek to know more. As an unique example
Of conjugal affection, happy, worthy
Spouses, your names to far posterity
Revered and celebrated shall descend.

Pher. The palace and the city and the whole
Of happy Thessaly shall now resound
With glad festivity.

Herc. And I will stay
Amongst you three whole days, which we will pass
With songs and banquets. Then to execute
Another order of Eurystheus (were it
Only the last!) my destiny impels me
To Thrace, there forcibly to seize the cruel
Human-flesh-eating mares of Diomedes.—
Meanwhile 'twill be a great alleviation
Of my past torments, and of those to come,
To see in you on earth a living mirror
Of all celestial gifts. Admetus only
Deserved Alcestis; only she deserved him.

Chorus. And both were worthy of sublime Alcides.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

00061057

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018